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2014

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2014 Melville House Library Sampler

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We look forward to seeing you at ALA Midwinter and Public Library Association Conferences in 2014! Please be sure to stop by the Melville House booth and say hello.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Kelley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Claire" and "Kelley" being capitalized and prominent.

Claire Kelley
Director of Library & Academic Marketing
Melville House

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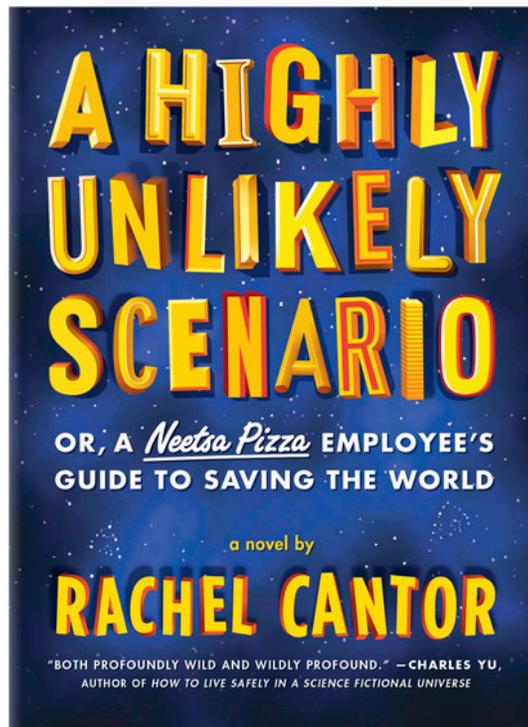
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Debut Fiction



A Highly Unlikely Scenario, or a Neetsa Pizza Employee's Guide to Saving the World

A Novel

Rachel Cantor

Trade Paperback

9781612192642 | \$16.95 U.S./Can.

January 14, 2014

In the spirit of *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Super Sad True Love Story*, comes a debut novel about an intergalactic pizza delivery hotline employee who falls in love with a librarian and travels through time to save the world.

"One of the reasons I loved working on A Highly Unlikely Scenario was Rachel's endlessly playful mixture of familiar and invented things, from hairstyles, gadgets, and food to political movements and philosophical doctrines. Who else could come up with the idea of 'Scottish tapas'?!" —Sal Robinson, editor

January 2014 Library Reads Selection

“Leonard works for Neetsa Pizza, a Pythagorean pizza chain, in the near-ish future. His job is to take calls, listen to complaints and help his customers achieve maximum pizza happiness. His employee manual gives him an answer for every scenario—until he gets a call from Marco, who seems to be calling from another time or space. Think of Terry Pratchett crossed with Douglas Adams.” —Jane Jorgenson, Madison Public Library, Madison, WI

“I devoured *A Highly Unlikely Scenario* and have recommended it numerous times. A fantastic read.” —Kayla Birt, Research and Instructional Services Librarian, Dickinson University

“I liked the creativity, sense of humor, and Leonard’s journey of discovery. *A Highly Unlikely Scenario* added up to an engaging, surprisingly thoughtful read.” —Marcus Lowry, teen librarian, Ramsey County Library in Roseville, Minnesota

“Definitely a fun read. I will be giving this to my Douglas Adams and Kurt Vonnegut fans. I love it when a book makes me laugh out loud.” —Nicole Schulert, Whittier Public Library

Excerpt from PART 2: THE BRAZEN HEAD

The Book Guide

Leonard’s Book Guide was Sally. She was his age, which is to say, about twenty-four and a half, and she wore her light brown hair on top of her head in a waterfall of curls and headbeads. She was lucky enough to have freckles, which she accentuated with freckledot makeup. Her clothes were old-fashioned—a combination of the heavy materials Leonard remembered from his last year of school, which is to say, when he was fifteen, and the neoclassical outfits Carol had worn at that age.

Sally shook Leonard’s hand and he felt electric sparks way past his elbow.

I will be your Book Guide, she said. Come this way that I may offer you some lemonade.

They followed, and Leonard liked the way she walked: it was as if all the air in the world belonged to her and made way when it saw her coming.

Pink, yellow, or green? she asked when they arrived at the serving station. She picked up a ladle, prepared to dip into one of three large wells.

Felix tugged at Leonard’s suit.

It’s her, he said.

I know, Leonard said.

Just looking

Do you find the lemonade refreshing? Sally asked.

Very, Leonard said.

Then finish it, please.

Leonard and Felix obliged, and she said, What shall be your destination today?

We don’t really know why we’re here, Leonard said. We’re just looking.

It will rather waste my time if I can’t guide you, Sally said.

I suppose we'd like to see whatever you find most interesting, Leonard said.

Sally's face brightened.

I'll take you to the Voynich manuscript! Check me out for three hours!

Leonard did, then Sally led them through the lobby with its vaulted ceilings and clerestory windows, through the din of the talking-books room, up a dark staircase into the silent scriptorium where pale undergraduates worked feather pens, down another staircase, through a hallway painted aqua and green, into a long, wide room containing many scholar tables. Sally stopped at one, retrieved a heavy leather clutchbag from a locked drawer, and on they walked till they reached a bubble-glass partition. We have to be absolutely invisible! she whispered, and blew on an antiquated breathreader. When the door opened, she pushed Leonard and Felix through ahead of her. More long hallways followed—and dark staircases, in which Leonard could now hear marching music.

That's Peter, Sally said, no longer whispering. He works for me. When he's on duty he pipes a military tattoo into the stairwells.

Leonard looked at her quizzically.

Don't worry, she said. It's a good thing.

I'm not worried, Leonard said, because already he trusted her, utterly and with his entire being, this woman who would be grandmother to his grandsons—and he wondered what he might give her, to show her his love. Milione had said women want only three things: wealth, position, and compliments. Well, Leonard had neither wealth nor position, not since he'd quit Neetsa Pizza. But he could offer compliments.

You guide very well, he said.

She ignored him.

They eventually passed through a wooden revolving door, marked with a sign that read Priceless Manuscripts, into a paneled room full of empty study tables. An old man peered at them from a curved desk that dominated the room.

That's Peter, Sally said. I'll vouch for you.

Thank you, Leonard said.

Peter said nothing, just handed them some antiseptic silk gloves and pressed a button, allowing them into a small room to the side.

The small room to the side

The room was small but opulent: stucco friezes of angels cavorting amid orchards framed the lower part of the walls; above waist level, the walls were painted with strange botanical specimens, huge plants with drooping buds, and roots that dug deep into the earth; the ceiling was adorned with gigantic gilt flames; and the floor was covered by a thick carpet of yellow, gold, and pink rosettes. Against the back wall was an elaborately carved black-walnut wardrobe that looked like it belonged in the Leader's domus. In the center of the room was a scholar's table with four matching swirly chairs.

The local Society of Cathars commissioned this room in 1873, said Sally. They wanted the manuscript to abide in magnificent surroundings. They are convinced that it is a lost Cathar treasure. They are wrong, of course.

Leonard nodded, not knowing what a Cathar treasure might be. He wished he could slip into the hallway and ask the Brazen Head, but Sally said, Gloves, please! and stood before the wardrobe—for a long time, as if gathering her strength—then opened the door with a key that was already in the lock. Inside, resting on a green plush dais, was a book—small but thick, about seven inches wide and ten inches long. On a bottom shelf were other old books, leather bound and stained, covered by a dustproof cloth. Sally removed the cloth, laid it reverently on the scholar's table, and placed the book from the dais on top of it.

This is the only unreadable book in the universe, she said. It is written in a code no one can understand. Emperor Rudolph II of Bohemia purchased the manuscript in 1586, though it is known to be older than that. The emperor was a strange man who amused himself with games and codes. He collected dwarves—

Dwarves? Leonard asked.

Don't interrupt, Sally said. If you interrupt, I forget where I am and have to start over.

Sorry, Leonard said.

He amused himself with games. He collected codes—no, he collected games. Gosh darn it!

Sally sat down and looked flummoxed.

I believe he collected dwarves, Leonard said.

If you know so much, why am I telling you? Are you from the Cathar Society? Is this a test?

I promise you, Leonard said, we are just an uncle and a nephew interested in books.

I think you should go now, Sally said.

But we've checked you out for three hours! Leonard said.

Sally looked defeated.

So you have, she said.

They're doing it! Felix said. Leonard, look!

The two adults turned quickly to look at Felix. His small face was rapt as he stared down at a page opened at random.

They're dancing! he cried. Just like in Grandpa's books, quick, look, the letters are dancing!

Q&A with Rachel Cantor, author of *A Highly Unlikely Scenario*:

Jewish mysticism plays a large part in A Highly Unlikely Scenario, from the characters of Isaac and Abulafia to the clapping song to the idea of ibburs and gilguls. Where does your interest in mysticism come from, and how have you pursued it?

Every year for about ten years I went on a meditation retreat led by some very interesting rabbis, who talked about a lot of Jewish mystical ideas, which I then read more about on my own. In particular, they introduced us to some of Abulafia's mystical practices, which involve combining Hebrew letters with vowels in particular patterns. These are concentration practices, but also practices of the body, as you breathe in and out with the letters. We learned that these were powerful practices, not to be engaged in lightly or shared willy-nilly with others. It was, in fact, one of these rabbis who inspired *A Highly Unlikely Scenario* by mentioning (offhandedly?) the incredible proliferation of mystical thinking in the thirteenth century, which is when Abulafia and Isaac the Blind lived. But Jewish mysticism is filled with wonderful ideas—I don't think I'm done exploring them in fiction.

Another of your interests appears to be the history of science, including figures like Roger Bacon. Is there something about the omnivorous intellectual curiosity of people like Bacon, who studied optics, astronomy, mathematics, and possibly flying machines (not to mention philosophy and theology), that appeals to you?

There's something compelling about thinkers—I won't call them Renaissance figures because Roger Bacon was definitely a medieval man—who are interested in everything, who see the connections in everything. Roger Bacon is one of those early scientific figures who doesn't see neat separations between the material, the spiritual, the intellectual, who finds explanations offered by alchemy or theology to be just as compelling as those offered by optics or engineering. He actually did construct a head made of brass (a brazen head) that was meant to serve as oracle. Who wouldn't want to write about such a figure!

The world of the novel is meticulously detailed, from the food, clothes, and hairstyles to things like the Hello! lamps on Everything's-Okay poles. Did you have this particular setting in mind, or did you invent aspects of it as you went along?

Everything about the book's invented setting evolved with the book; coming up with these details was one of the great pleasures of writing this book. Nothing is more fun than starting a sentence not knowing how it will end. While some aspects of the book had to be more controlled, even in the first draft—the cosmology, the three-part structure—most of the details could be invented spontaneously. The Scottish dishes

prepared by Carol's restaurant, however, are all real, and none are probably bite-sized!

You spent some of your childhood in Rome. Did you draw on those memories when you were portraying medieval Rome in the book? What's your favorite place to visit in Rome?

A lot of the Roman setting did come from memory—most notably, the itinerary Sally and Leonard follow as they travel around the city: from an unnamed neighborhood to the river, across the bridge, past the Castel Sant'Angelo, to the old St. Peter's, across the bridge again, down the river, past the island to the Portico of Octavia (the fish market), and on to the Theater of Marcellus. There's not a lot left in Rome that's medieval, apart from some churches, so I also spent time looking over old maps, and reading books about the medieval city—its pilgrims, architecture, daily life, weapons, the Inquisition, the Jewish population, and so on. The St. Peter's in the book, for example, is the old St. Peter's, which was demolished to make room for the basilica we now see, of Michelangelo fame. My favorite Roman places did not make it into the book: the multi-leveled San Clemente church, for example; or Trastevere, the neighborhood where I grew up; or the flea market at Porta Portese. As well as numerous pizzerie and gelaterie!

One of the most poignant relationships in the book is the one between Leonard and his grandfather, especially as Leonard realizes what his grandfather was trying to get across to him all those years, with his stories and strange questions. And in a more general sense, the novel seems especially concerned with different generations learning to understand and appreciate each other. I guess what I'm asking is: do you have nephews with magical powers and a grandfather who likes herring?

Hah! I do have nieces and nephews—four, at last count—each as precocious and precious as Felix, if not more so. This book is dedicated to them, in fact. Writing this book made me think about kids, their imagination and magical sense of what's possible. And it's also about received wisdom, wisdom transmitted from generation to generation. The word Kabbalah can be translated as what is received (and we remember that receptivity is Leonard's Special Gift!). Transmission of learning and heritage through the generations is important here, but so is the simpler transmission of love and care between and among generations.

A Highly Unlikely Scenario by Rachel Cantor will be available on January 14, 2014.

Trade Paperback
9781612192642

Ebook
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For more information, visit mhpbooks.com.



The Weirdness

A Novel

Jeremy P. Bushnell

Trade Paperback

9781612193151 | \$16.95 U.S./Can.

March 4, 2014

With the literary muscle of Victor LaValle's *Big Machine* and the outlandish humor of Kevin Smith's *Dogma*, this debut reveals the dark underbelly of the New York literary scene.

"I loved working on The Weirdness because Billy, the protagonist, is someone you feel you know already. He's the guy who thinks too much, who is always running late, who can't seem to pull his life together. The sight of a banana in a bodega—and wondering where it came from—can derail his day completely. In Jeremy Bushnell's wild imagination, Billy's life and his city are suddenly at the center of some serious supernatural crises. The banal things we take for granted, from bananas to Power-point presentations, shimmer with humor in the world of The Weirdness." —Kirsten Reach, editor

Excerpt from CHAPTER ONE:

Billy Ridgeway walks into a bar with a banana in his hand.

It's November, and gloom has settled over Brooklyn, but this bar generates its own warmth, running forced heat over a narrow room crammed full of humans. A clientele mashed into intimate proximity by shared need, if not exactly by fellow-feeling. They drink together. Someone picks out old L.A. hardcore songs on the jukebox to correct for the sins of the person who picked out a block of Texas swing. Someone

else picks out masterpieces of East Coast hip-hop to correct for the sins of the person who picked out the block of hardcore songs. They generate friction, these off-duty waitresses and delivery guys and dog walkers. They rub elbows and bellies and backs, and together they hold winter and its wolves at bay.

Billy finds Anil Mallick at the end of the bar, where he is managing to defend two stools against the throng through some combination of fast talk and physical maneuverings. Anil is a chubby guy who wears half-moon spectacles and favors tweedy blazers; his round head is topped with a sumptuous mass of lanky curls; he works in the kitchen at a sandwich shop but anyone here, in this bar, could mistake him for a kinda hot young academic. Anil is Billy's coworker and oldest friend, and Anil, tonight, is testy.

"I thought you were just going to get cash," says Anil. "You've been gone for"—he checks his watch—"twenty-two minutes."

"Yeah, sorry," Billy says.

Anil regards this apology. "There's a bank literally two doors down from here," he says.

"Yeah, I just—got distracted." Billy puts the banana on the gouged bar, between them. "Take a look at this."

"A banana," Anil says.

"Right, but, where did it come from?"

Anil blinks.

"I mean, yes," Billy says. "It's a banana. We get bananas from, what, from the bodega."

"Sure," Anil says, patiently. He sips his Scotch. "Like a lottery ticket. Or cigarettes."

"Well, sure," Billy says. "Except a banana isn't like a lottery ticket or cigarettes. I mean—it has to grow."

"Cigarettes grow," Anil says.

"Yeah, but—hear me out."

"I am hearing you out."

"We live in Brooklyn," Billy tries. "It's the middle of November. And yet we can go into any corner store and buy a banana. Where do they come from? Who grew them? I mean, I go into the store to hit the ATM, and I see these bananas sitting there, and I just stand there for a second, in the store, looking at them, and I'm thinking about, like, Costa Rica or Ecuador or some shit and it's just—I'm sorry, but it's just blowing my mind a little."

"This took twenty minutes?" Anil says.

"I thought that you, of all people, would appreciate the fundamental weirdness of the whole thing."

"You left me here for twenty-two minutes," Anil says. "Are you asking me to believe that you spent a significant portion of those twenty-two minutes staring at a banana in some kind of trance? Forcing the better-adjusted members of our fair city to steer around you to complete their own humble transactions?"

Billy frowns. "Admit that it's weird," he says.

"It's not weird! It's normal. Humanity has at least eighty thousand years of commerce under its collective belt; the details of that should no longer seem opaque to you. You want to talk weird? Open a newspaper. Last week? You see that thing about the Starbucks in Midtown that disappeared? They think the employees went on the run together, stole everything out of it to sell on the black market or something. That's weird. The shit that happens to you is not weird."

"Commerce is weird," Billy says. "I mean, think about it. People buy things."

"And I," Anil says, "am buying you a drink. Put that goddamn banana away."

Here's the thing about Billy. Bananas are not the only things that get him going. It can be anything. Just a week ago he was on the subway, sitting across from a woman with a tiny dog in her purse, and as he watched her tickle the little goatish beard under its chin he made the mistake of beginning to think about the very existence of dogs in general. People have pets. He repeated it. People have pets. It began to become odd; the very concept of pet began to slide out of his grasp. How did it get to the point, he wondered, where we began to keep animals as, like, accessories? He spent the rest of the ride staring at the dog, thinking basically: Holy shit, human beings, the shit they come up with. When he got back to his apartment he looked up dog in Wikipedia and from there started opening tabs and lost the rest of the day. By midnight, he had drifted to looking at videos of fighting Madagascar cockroaches, actually developing

opinions on the cockroach-fight-video genre. He was cold. He was alone. He was uncertain as to what exactly had happened. It had long been like this.

Q&A with Jeremy P. Bushnell, author of *The Weirdness*:

What's the proper way to make a deal with the devil?

The first problem people run into when making a deal with the devil is that it's actually not that easy to get the devil's attention. He's actually like super busy. A day rarely goes by without some mall goth or humanities academic calling on the devil to intercede. To compound the problem, most people don't know enough to offer the hat devil something that he actually *wants*. The cliché has it that what the devil wants is your soul, but this couldn't be further from the truth. The soul might be a beautiful, eternal thing—Marilynne Robinson calls it a “singular light within that great general light of existence”—but without a really demonstrable practical function, it doesn't confer much in the way of advantage, which makes it kind of a weird thing to bring to the bargaining table. The devil is a creature of appetite, not ultimately all that different from the rest of us, so offer him a bag of metamphetamines or a pile of Kit Kats, not some ineffable glowy part of yourself. Then maybe you stand a chance.

Have any books in particular inspired you as you've written this story?

Oh, undeniably. I think it's important for writers to be open to a wide range of influences as they're working on a book. During the time I was working on *The Weirdness*, I wrote the following on my blog: “when you're deeply concentrated on the million little problem-sets of a novel, everybody else's novels begin to look like different approaches to the same challenges, and thus [they] are not only entertaining, but also pedagogically instructive.” And I really believe that.

Two books that I kept in mind a lot while writing *The Weirdness* were William Gibson's *Zero History* and Richard Price's *Lush Life*. Which is funny, because my book doesn't really resemble either very closely. But I thought both of these books consistently excelled at two things. The first is that they adhere to the norms of a popular genre: they build a thrilling genre plot, keep it in motion, and resolve it satisfyingly. The second is that they also provide all the goods that we associate with “non-genre,” “literary” fiction: insight into character, vivid description, an eye for revealing detail, a willingness to dig into the delightfully crunchy aspects of the human condition. Lots of books do one thing or the other well, but not that many do both well, and these two books stood out in this regard.

A little later those two were joined by two others, both apocalyptic in tenor: Colson Whitehead's *Zone One* and Nick Harkaway's *The Gone-Away World*. In an interview, Harkaway shared some valuable insight on how to write apocalyptic fiction that influenced *The Weirdness* quite deeply: “It's not really enough any more to say ‘this will destroy the world,’ because that's sort of a given. You have to show what that means, why it matters. You have to show pain. We all know about pain on some level. Apocalypse is a gag. Pain is real. Contemporary issues—albeit dressed up and taken sideways—they make you feel. You have a stake in the action. And without that sense of investiture, action is just noise.” I posted that quote at the top of my blog during the drafting of my book, and it sat there for two solid months before I finally replaced it with an angry thing about gender representation in *New York Times* coverage.

Were you inspired by video games in your writing of this story?

Pretty much my whole life I've been writing stories and designing games. Before I even owned a computer I was making up video games, mapping out sprawling level maps on loose-leaf paper. (This was around the same time that I was writing a terrible longhand imitation of David Eddings's Belgariad novels, and drawing a terrible imitation of Chris Claremont's *Uncanny X-Men* comics, just to complete the picture of Young

Jeremy's range of influences.) At some point, every person who loves both video games and stories succumbs to the tempting belief that the interest in one can positively influence the production of the other. What I mean is: at some point readers who work on games yearn to make a game that can have the complexity and depth of a novel, and gamers who write stories yearn to write something that gives the reader some level of gamelike interactive control over the narrative. After spending five years writing a piece of online narrative that could be navigated in open-ended, exploratory, ludic ways, I have come to believe that these yearnings should be firmly resisted: games and stories are fundamentally different in all sorts of really important ways. They don't actually mix all that well. Having now been paid actual money for both designing games and writing stories, I can say that in order to succeed at writing a story you need to focus in on the things that make stories work, and in order to succeed at producing a game you need to focus on the things that make games work. None of which is to say that games can't provide players with narratively robust experiences, nor is it to say that stories can't draw upon the aesthetics of games to spectacular effect. The moment when Scott Pilgrim levels up and pulls a flaming sword out of his heart is probably one of my favorite moments in all of twenty-first-century literature.

Where do bananas in bodegas come from, anyway?

I really can't answer that. I mean, I could take a guess as to a country of origin—Ecuador?—but in terms of representing, explaining, or even comprehending the supply chain behind it, I stand no better chance than my protagonist. I just kind of stare at the end product in a stupefied awe.

That's actually what I'm getting at with the book's title: the "weirdness" doesn't really refer to warlocks running around the city and Lucifer appearing in your living room. That stuff is weird, for sure, but the *fundamental* weirdness is the world, the complexities of just living in a society. Things like commerce and food distribution and pet ownership—these topics are as vast and thrilling and beautiful and problematic as any other topic that literature examines.

The new manuscript that I'm working on is even more explicitly concerned with logistical chains and industrial production, so I've been reading a ton on the topic, which has led me to great books like Thomas Thwaite's *The Toaster Project* (in which the author tries to make a toaster from scratch), and great online writing like Nicola Twilley's Edible Geography blog. If you dig around at Twilley's site long enough, you'll find the answer to the banana question, no lie.

The Weirdness by Jeremy P. Bushnell will be available on March 4, 2014.

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For more information, visit mhpbooks.com.



Everlasting Lane

Andrew Lovett

Hardcover

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September 2, 2014

A debut novel based in part on the author's childhood. Nine-year-old Peter's childhood friendship with a precocious neighborhood girl brings him joy, but the secrets of a locked room in his grandmother's cottage cast a shadow over his family.

"One of the best reading experiences you can have—not just as a publisher, but as a reader—is when you discover a new writer and they turn out to be wonderful. So the further I got into Andrew Lovett's debut book—a heartwarming yet suspenseful story about a little boy forced to move from London to the countryside after the death of his father—the more excited I got. I loved Lovett's gorgeous prose, and the way he fashioned a plot that's both sweet and dark. Most important, he's crafted a character that Dickens would envy, and whom you'll want to meet again." —Dennis Johnson, editor and publisher

Excerpt from **CHAPTER ONE:**

I was nine years old the night my father died. Or ten.

I don't remember.

'Peter?' My mother's voice. 'Peter?'

'What?' I was half-awake, half-asleep. 'What is it?' Like the moon: half sunlight, half midnight. All moon.

'Peter.'

'What is it?'

I was in my bed, eyes closed, my mother's breath on my face. And I could see her tears like stars, for although my eyes were closed I believed them open.

She took me in her arms; pulled me to my feet.

'What?' My heart thumping in the darkness. 'What is it? Where's Daddy?'

I was led by the hand into the brightly lit corridor. 'Peter, you know Daddy's been poorly a long time—'

'No!' Struggling in her arms. 'No!' Louder: 'No!' Screaming: 'No, no, no!' Twisting, turning, pounding with my fists. 'No, no, no!'

'Peter. Come and see him, Peter.' I wrestled free. 'Please don't do this.'

I ran to my room, the door slamming behind me and I hid, cold and breathless, beneath sheets and blankets.

From the landing, silence. And then a terrible howl rising from the silence, filling the night. And then long, trembling sobs fading away. A door closed. My mother cried alone.

So, how do I begin?

It was 1975 when he died. Or 1976. I don't know. It was definitely a year in which I was ten.

As they lowered his coffin into the warm ground my mother's face crumpled up like old tissues, her tears drying in the spring sun, her make-up all blotchy.

A tall man with sharp, little teeth and shiny, black eyes took my mother's hand. 'This is a terrible, terrible tragedy,' he said. 'If there's anything I can do.'

'Peter,' said my mother, 'this is Doctor Todd. Say "hello".'

'Peter,' he beamed. 'Your mother's told me so much about you. I didn't get the chance to really know your father, of course, but I believe he was a wonderful man.' A fat cigar burned bright between his knuckles. 'A wonderful man. And so devoted to you. And to your mother, of course . . .'

Stooping, he pinched a clump of soil between forefinger and thumb, tugged it from the upturned pile and tossed it into my father's grave. He plucked a red handkerchief from his breast pocket to wipe his fingers clean.

'I'm so alone,' said my mother. 'So completely alone.'

I missed my father very much but sometimes it was nice having my mother to myself. I couldn't remember the last time she'd hugged and kissed me and told me she loved me. And she told me stories about my father. He'd been in the war fighting the Germans before she'd even been born. 'He always told me,' she said, 'that he waited to marry someone who hadn't been alive then: someone, I don't know, clean.'

She was only young and very beautiful but she had this sore leg that hurt when she was tired or sad and I would fetch a stool so she could rest it. I would look at her smooth, copper hair curling at the shoulder, her autumn eyes shining and think of bonfires and fireworks, of blackberry picking and everlasting misty mornings.

But sometimes she would look at me like a mad man and shout: 'Peter, tidy your bloody room!' She would grab fistfuls of paper. 'Throw away all this rubbish!'

'But I—'

'Just keep what's important and throw away the rest!'

'But I don't know—'

'And I don't know how I'm supposed to cope with you running around under my feet all day long!'

Or I'd stare at her and she'd shout, 'For God's sake, Peter, say "boo" to a goose!' or, 'Don't just stand there crying like a baby!' And her face would move so close to mine that I could smell her breath and see my own startled reflection in her eyes.

A few weeks after the funeral I returned home from school to a kitchen full of pots and pans, and a table laid with the best mats and the nice plates with the gold edge. And beside each mat not just one knife and

fork but several. And there were three places laid. There were three of everything.

There were three knocks on the front door.

'Hello, Peter,' said Doctor Todd.

'Peter!' My mother, stepping into the hallway, wiped her hands on her apron and struggled to unpick the strings tied across her tummy. Beneath the apron she wore the green dress my father'd bought her, a golden necklace and the butterfly earrings that sparkled if she laughed. 'Doctor Todd,' she said, 'Clive, you're,' glancing at the hall clock, 'right on time.'

'It pays to be punctual,' said Doctor Todd. 'I abhor lateness. Ha!' And as he laughed the house filled with the smell of cigar smoke stinking it up like a dead cat.

My mother laughed too: 'Ha-ha-ha,' her hand waving politely in front of her face.

'These are for you,' he said, pink roses appearing from behind his back. 'A token of my—ahem—esteem.'

'Oh,' she murmured, 'they're lovely!'

'Yes,' said Doctor Todd. 'Red, I thought, perhaps too demonstrative; white too cold; and yellow too ambiguous.' He touched her shoulder and kissed her cheek. She blushed when she caught me looking.

'Goodness,' said Doctor Todd, touching her earrings. 'These are very pretty.'

'I've got a bit of a thing about butterflies,' she said smiling nervously. Doctor Todd chuckled. 'Well, anyway,' she scooped a strand of red hair behind her ear, 'the flowers are lovely, Clive. Thank you but you really shouldn't . . . I'll put them in some water.'

'And, Peter, how have you been? Behaving yourself I hope.' He showed his teeth. 'Ah, of course, the enigmatic Peter I've heard so much about. A gift,' he announced, presenting me with a small box, 'to help you,' and he tapped me on the head with each word, 'or-ga-nise yourself.' It was a watch with a thick strap and little hands ticking.

'What do you say, Peter?' called my mother from the kitchen.

'Thank you.'

'You'll think of me every time you look at it,' he said, 'eh, Peter?' and he nudged my shoulder. 'Ha!'

'That's so kind, Clive.' My mother was stood in the doorway watching us. The evening sun played like music in her hair.

Doctor Todd cleared his throat, his face suddenly pink. 'I couldn't help but notice a Lipton's on the corner. If it's not too . . . Why don't I go and buy us a nice bottle of wine?'

'If you're sure,' said my mother. And then she smiled. 'Yes. That would be lovely.'

'Perhaps Peter wouldn't mind keeping me company, eh, Peter?'

'Yes,' said my mother. 'That would be lovely.'

'I know, Peter,' said Doctor Todd as we walked along, the setting sun stretching our shadows, 'you like games, don't you? Why don't we play a game? Let's see. I know, why don't you tell me the very first thing you remember. I mean your very earliest memory.'

Well, I couldn't have answered that even if I'd wanted to. I didn't really have any memories of when I was very little. It was just like a big, black hole. Sometimes I would try to remember things. I'd poke my head into the hole but all I could hear were echoes and I would feel all giddy standing there on the very edge. The only really earliest thing I could remember was this one day after we moved when it started snowing and my father took me into the garden. I ran round and round trying to catch it. The snow, I mean. It was nearly over the top of my boots. And I could remember Daddy grabbing me and lifting me into the air. It seemed so high and I was laughing and screaming, and he was laughing. And then he hugged me really tight. And then I could even remember looking across to where my mother was staring at us through the kitchen window, tears on her face.

There was this photo on the TV of my father from when he was in the army. I could barely remember him being well, sat all day in front of the television, the curve of his ribs through the top of his pyjamas, thin hair turning to snow. He'd lift his unshaven face and smile his skeleton smile: 'How was school today?'

'Okay.'

And I'd go out and ride my bike up and down the rain-soaked street until teatime.

And I could remember how I would lie in bed and hear my mother pleading with him to stay. And later I

would listen to her pacing back and forth, muttering to herself; and to my father's breath hissing like steam.

But I didn't say any of that to Doctor Todd.

He bought a bottle of wine and gave me ten new pence for Blackjacks and Fruit Salads.

'Could I have a receipt?' he asked the lady.

On the way back, Doctor Todd said, 'And how are things at home?'

I chewed hard, my teeth all sticky and my tongue turning to liquorice-grey.

'Ah,' said Doctor Todd. 'I see.'

It was a proper dinner with three courses, four if you counted the cheese. I had to turn off the television.

Doctor Todd sat with a straight back and forked cubes of meat into his puckery mouth. Between chews he asked me about school ('So, do you have many friends or one particular close friend?') and my hobbies ('Your mother tells me you keep a scrapbook. I'd love to take a look') and some things I didn't even understand ('Tell me, Peter, do you ever find you're awake when you thought you were dreaming?'). And as he talked his eyes gleamed and he caressed his sideburns like a pantomime villain.

I turned my arctic roll to mush with my spoon. 'Peter!' said my mother tapping my arm. 'When Doctor Todd asks you a question, you must answer. And make sure you're telling the truth.'

'Ha!' exclaimed our guest lighting a cigar and sucking until his cheeks went all hollow. 'Not to worry. Peter will talk when Peter's good and ready to talk, isn't that right, eh, Peter?' The smell of smoke was making me sick. 'Do you know, my mother would never—*never*—have allowed me to even sit with my elders, let alone *speak* at the table.'

'I am so sorry, Clive,' said my mother. 'It's just sometimes he has a very vivid—'

'Yes, yes,' said Doctor Todd. 'With regards to that, Peter, do you think you ever find it hard to distinguish between—'

And I tipped my pudding to the floor with a crash. Ice cream bloomed on the kitchen tiles from beneath the shattered bowl.

And so I was sent to bed.

And so, how do I begin?

Everlasting Lane by Andrew Lovett will be available on September 2, 2014.

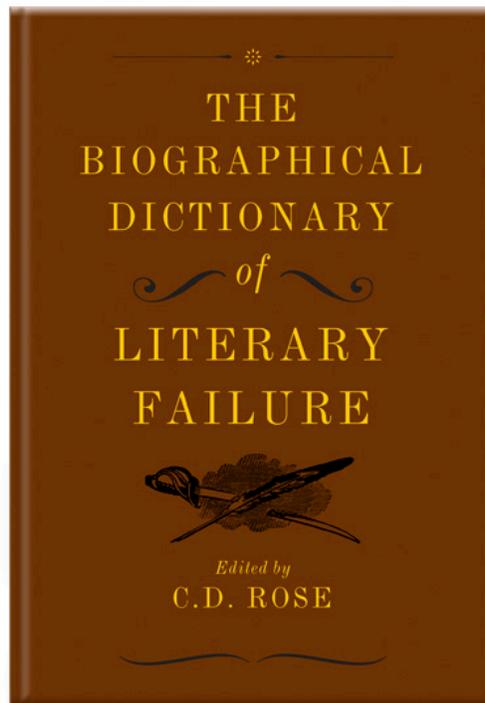
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The Biographical Dictionary of Literary Failure

Edited by C. D. Rose

Introduction by Andrew Gallix

Hardcover

9781612193786 | \$18.95 U.S./Can.

November 4, 2014

A darkly comic fake reference book about writers who never made it into the literary canon with illustrations by Sam Potts, who has worked as a designer for *The New York Times*, *The Believer*, and *McSweeney's*.

"In C.D. Rose's own words, a book about failure has become his biggest success. The poor writers he has imagined in this book think they have it all figured out: they should sell expensive art edition copies of their books at Christie's or build themselves elaborate libraries or write books so concise they won't contain anything at all. Alas, nothing works. They're all out of print, and they'll make you curious about the real writers who have been lost to the literary canon. I was charmed by C.D. Rose's 'editor' voice from the first entries, and some surprising threads emerge to tie together these 'lost' writers together in the end." — Kirsten Reach, editor

Excerpt:



Ernst Bellmer

'Everyone has a book inside them,' it is often said, and while this may or may not be true, for Ernst Bellmer the commonplace had an unusual validity.

Born in Vienna in 1875, Bellmer grew up the autodidact son of an innkeeper, voraciously reading anything that was left lying around in his father's hostelry. Feuilletons and three-decker novels, penny dreadfuls and pages of the yellow press, chapbooks, almanacs, encyclopedias and broadsides: all were devoured by his gaze. By the age of eighteen, he had ingested enough to begin producing. Over the course of the next few years, Bellmer wrote at least fifty tales (mostly closely observed vignettes of lower middle-class Viennese life) as well as an epic bildungsroman, *Der Mann mit den blühenden Händen*, concerning the life of a lower-middle-class Viennese innkeeper's son and his desperate struggle to become an artist.

But Bellmer was vexed, and it was not the sad failure to find a publisher for his many writings that vexed him. Bellmer suffered, but not from that familiar graphomane pull, that need to translate every thought, feeling or event of his life into words, that overwhelming desire to record and memorise everything by folding it into a more or less probable narrative. No, Bellmer had a less familiar problem: he was a bibliophage. For Bellmer, the aesthetic act was not complete unless his words, once committed to paper, were then eaten.

Bibliophagy is a rare complaint, its very existence doubted by many clinical practitioners and often used as a metaphor rather than in its strict pathological sense. Yet to Bellmer, who suffered not only from this strange psychological compulsion but also from the crippling indigestion it engendered, it was very real.

One of his father's regular clients made him an appointment with Wilhelm Fliess, but the doctor found Bellmer's condition insufficiently interesting (or, perhaps, insufficiently lucrative) and passed it on to his friend and colleague Sigmund Freud (who included a study of the case, entitled "The Book Eater," in an early version of *Three Essays in the Theory of Sexuality*, only to have it removed by his editors, who doubted its veracity). Freud in turn passed Bellmer on to Friedrich Loeb (grandfather of Maxwell), with whom he sustained a long-lasting though ultimately unsuccessful analysis, dying at the age of seventy-five from ink poisoning.

It seems sad that Bellmer's undoubtedly fascinating excavations of the underbelly of fin-de-siècle Viennese life will never be read, and more intrepid researchers may well have dived into the Austrian capital's sewers to find what remains of his manuscripts, but there we shall not go, leaving Bellmer's work to decay (as surely as all books one day shall).



Pasquale Frunzio

The city of Turin is known for its chocolate, motorcars and literary suicides. Cesare Pavese overdosed on barbiturates in the Albergo Roma just opposite Porta Nuova railway station while Primo Levi threw himself from the top of a stairwell in his apartment building on Corso Re Umberto. Swamped by debt and ripped off by his publisher, the swashbuckler Emilio Salgari used a barber's razor to perform an extravagant seppuku in the hills behind his house on Corso Casale. Friedrich Nietzsche took his time to die, but began the process by throwing his arms around a horse's neck and weeping extravagantly on Piazza Carlo Alberto, never again composing a legible word.

It is for this reason, perhaps, that Pasquale Frunzio moved to the city, taking up a dull job with the Italian state insurance company while working on *Lo Specchio Segreto*, a slim collection of late modernist verse. Pace Kafka, Pessoa and Svevo (all major influences), Frunzio was a quiet, modest man, who bided his time in the Inpdap offices unnoticed and spent his evenings working on his poems, no extravagance greater than a plate of pasta asciutta and a bottle of seltzer water.

While most writers will have considered the persistence of their reputation post mortem, few will have actively considered death as a career strategy. Not so Pasquale Frunzio. Frustrated by his inability to get any of his work into print, or even to get anyone to read it, he exercised the calculating logic and methodical precision praised by his day job, and decided to kill himself. Only then, Frunzio believed, would his work be noticed.

Frunzio carefully wrote a letter (one of his finest works, he thought, which would surely eventually form the preface to his opera omnia) and placed it on the table in the living room of his small flat in San Salvario, together with a clearly typed manuscript of *Lo Specchio Segreto*.

He then put on his best blue suit and (probably inspired by Sylvia Plath) turned on his gas oven, opened the door and placed his head in it. However, at the moment when the fumes were beginning to take effect, his doorbell rang. Though Frunzio was somewhat drowsy at this point, he was always a man of regular, polite habit, and dragged himself off the kitchen floor to answer. A postman stood at the door bearing a telegram from none other than the esteemed publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, expressing apologies for the accidental return of *Lo Specchio Segreto*, which he considered a masterpiece and wished to publish post haste. Taken aback by this unexpected reversal, Frunzio sat down at his desk and, wanting to read the telegram more carefully to make sure he hadn't misunderstood it, turned on the light. A spark from the switch ignited the cloud of gas which had, by now, filled his apartment, resulting in a large explosion and completely immolating Frunzio, his farewell letter, and all of his work, of which—in a rare lapse—he had made no copy.

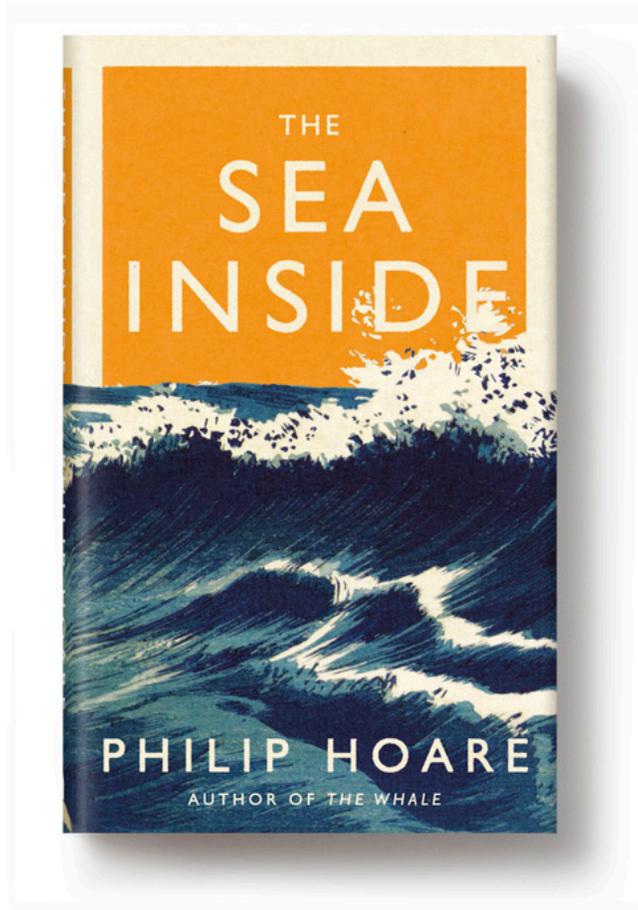
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Nonfiction



The Sea Inside

Philip Hoare

Hardcover

9781612193595 | \$27.99 U.S./Can.

April 29, 2014

A personal story of travel and ocean history from the award-winning author of *The Whale*, Philip Hoare's lyrical examination of our essential ocean creatures includes numerous illustrations by the author.

“A good story can transport you, and if you’re alone in the ocean with hundreds of dolphins, you’ll want Philip Hoare swimming at your side. He is fully attuned to the history of the natural world and its creatures. I was eager to read his next book after Leviathan, which won the Samuel Johnson Prize in 2009, and was taken with his journey through the sea and its coasts in The Sea Inside. This is Melville House’s first whale book.” —Kirsten Reach, editor

Excerpt from CHAPTER FOUR:

From my plane window, the islands seem to rise up as if newly erupted from the sea. It’s four years to the day since I last came here. I know that because the same festival is in progress. Perhaps it never ended.

Every so often rockets fizz into the air. Troupes of children and adults are dancing and singing, each followed by their own brass band. Teenage boys who elsewhere would be embarrassed to take part in such a procession are dressed in satin bows. They and their partners pirouette along the route, dancing down to

the square, where, the following day, in the shadow of the basalt-outlined church, tables will be loaded with round loaves of sweet bread, stuck over with flowers and offered up to São Pedro, patron saint of fishermen. For all these joyous celebrations, however, a current of reservation runs through these streets, defined as they are by the sea.

A few months before that last visit my mother had died. My grief seemed implicit in this place. I felt open to its remoteness and obscurity, its clinker-dark shores which looked as though the whole place had burnt to the ground.

The mid-Atlantic night is pitch-black and impenetrable. The moonless sky sinks into the sea, allowing the Cory's shearwaters to sail inland to their nests, feathery ghosts in the darkness. All day they've worked the waters, seizing fish and squid from below the waves. But as evening falls, they burst into eerie squeaks—qwwaaark—qwakwak—qwwaaark—strangled, semi-human, halfcomical cries constantly reiterated as they soar inshore, each sounding more demonic than the last; little wonder that their calls were once thought to be those of the devil.

They owe their common name to Charles B. Cory, the nineteenth-century ornithologist and golfer who first described them in 1881, and whose house in Boston was stuffed with nineteen thousand avian specimens; their Latin title is rather more prolix, *Calonectris diomedea borealis*. Shearwaters—which do precisely that—hail from the family of procellarids, after procella or storm, the kind of weather they are supposed to favour. It was one reason why sailors were wary of their appearance; another being that they were believed to bear the souls of their drowned comrades.



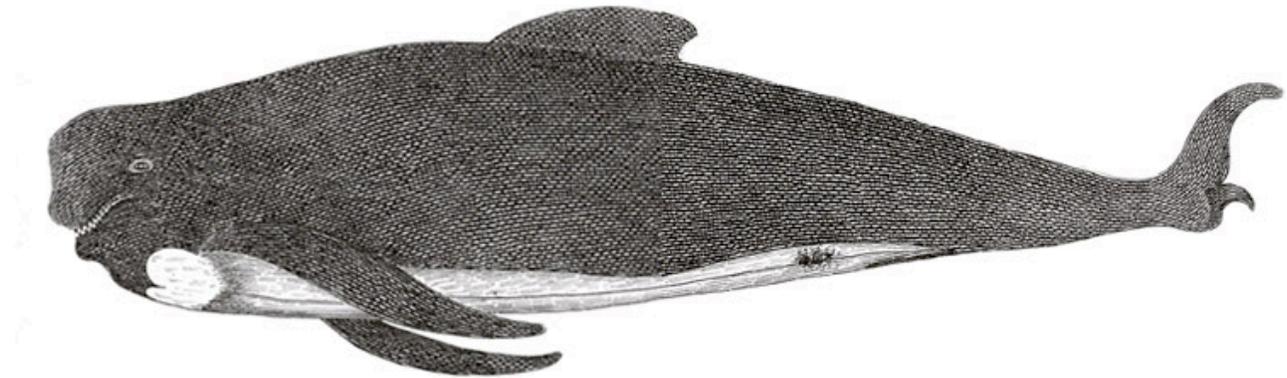
Their order includes some of the most romantic birds of the sea: the albatrosses, fulmars, puffins and storm petrels. Like whales, they have evolved mechanisms to cope with an oceanic life: olfactory bulbs in their brains that allow them to smell their food from far away; tubes in their beaks that discharge salt water; and a diet of fish, squid and krill which produces a noisome stomach oil potent enough to dissolve the plumage of any interloper who is on the receiving end of a projectile vomit, although its greatest benefit is as a highly calorific fuel. Procellarids require such energy, since they are the greatest riders of oceanic winds, which echo the currents below. From wandering albatrosses with twelve-foot wingspans to tiny storm petrels barely bigger than a sparrow, they undertake journeys so ambitious that they occasionally get lost and end up in strange locations, such as the back of a whale. Or perhaps not so strange, since their kind have long been called 'whale birds' after the way they appear to herald leviathans. Storm petrels will fly downwind of hunting orcas, savouring the fishy grease in their blows. Off Cape Cod, I've watched clouds of greater shearwaters over feeding humpbacks, even dipping into the whales' mouths to pluck out sand eels.

In the waters off the Azores, whales and dolphins drive to the surface the deep-water prey that the birds cannot ordinarily reach; as the cetaceans round up their bait, the shearwaters dive down to feed on the same source. Sadly, these seabirds suffer from our own hunting habits. Tens of thousands of procellarids die each year snared on longlines, strung out along them like a gamekeeper's line; some escape only to return to their nests, beaks loaded and pierced with hooks.

Cory's shearwaters mate for life, returning to the same site each year to lay a single egg. They regurgitate their day's catch, supplemented with rich stomach oil, into the mouths of their begging chicks,

all under the cover of a dark moon to avoid predatory gulls. With their legs at the back of their bodies, setting their centre of gravity awry like wonky clockwork toys, they are at their most vulnerable on the ground. Yet these islands must suit such precarious lives, since they are home to seventy thousand breeding pairs of shearwaters that gather here from all over the North Atlantic, very noisily. They echo in my ears as I lose consciousness, and rouse me a few hours later when the birds start to leave before dawn. Too late to sleep, too soon to rise, I give in, lie awake, and listen.

I realise that each cry is individual (odd how we assume all animals of a species sound the same, as if everyone we knew spoke in an identical intonation). I start to hear how the intervals between each screech change; how they elide the two central notes of their four-note phrase, and how the final squawk goes up in tone. I practise Cory calls in my head, wondering if they're different from the sounds they make as they come in—'Don't worry, I'm here, I'm home,' as opposed to 'See you later, don't worry, I'll be back soon.' Like other nesting seabirds such as the gannet, their mates can recognise each other's cries over the hubbub, a phenomenon known as 'the cocktail-party effect'. There is also sexual dimorphism at work, a behavioural difference between the genders: the male's call is distinctly more ringing in tone, presumably to attract its mate. Mulling over these sounds in my head and what they may or may not mean, I drift back to sleep till the sun rises over the volcano and it's time to go back to sea myself.

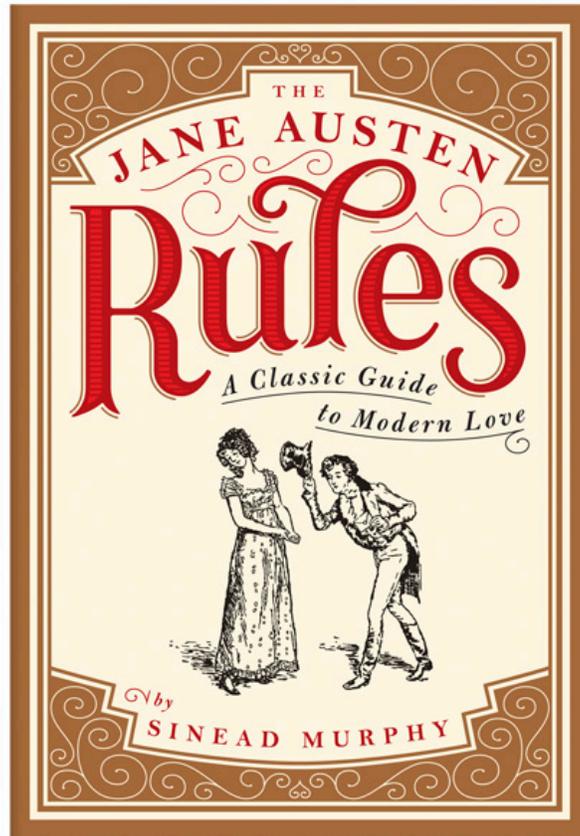


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The Jane Austen Rules
A Classic Guide to Modern Love
Sinead Murphy
Paperback
9781612193823 | \$15.95 U.S./Can.
October 14, 2014

A whip-smart young critic makes a sharp critique of modern dating guides, presenting Jane Austen's books as the antidote. A lush package includes period illustrations.

"Sinead Murphy wants you to have great expectations for a relationship, and plenty of confidence in your own self-worth. I loved revisiting my favorite characters from Austen novels through Sinead's good humor, and hearing answers to contemporary relationship problems inspired by the question, 'What would Jane do?'" —Kirsten Reach, editor

Excerpt from the INTRODUCTION:

At an evening party in *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Lucas has this to say, on the topic of finding a man:

If a woman conceals her affection from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him. In nine cases out of ten a woman had better show more affection than she feels. She should make

the most of every half-hour in which she can command his attention. When she is secure of him, there will be more leisure for falling in love as much as she chooses.

In response to this piece of wisdom, Elizabeth Bennet smiles in disbelief, accusing Charlotte of airing opinions on which she would never really act. *Fixing* a man? *Securing* a man? Hardly the language of either romance or reason! Charlotte Lucas is a woman of intelligence and feeling, and here is the kind of *scheming* to which no such woman would stoop, surely!

Ah, how wrong we can be! For Charlotte does act upon the opinions she airs to Elizabeth, winning the dubious honour of marrying Mr Collins, *fixing* his wandering affections in order to *secure* for herself a stable and comfortable future. 'Engaged to Mr Collins!', cries Elizabeth, when first she hears the news. 'My dear Charlotte – impossible!' But it is not only possible, it is true, and Elizabeth is forced to suffer the pangs of 'a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem.'

But come forward now some two hundred years or so, and we must suffer the pangs of *an entire female race*, disgracing itself and sunk in our esteem! For there is a book on the market, a book that has found millions of readers, which purports to list the necessary rules not for *fixing*, nor for *securing*, but for '*capturing* the heart of Mr Right.' To be sure, the advice this book gives is the very opposite of that proposed by Charlotte Lucas: rather than showing *more* affection than she feels, a woman, according to *The Rules*, must treat the man she is 'really, really crazy about' as if he is the man she is 'not that interested in'; a woman, in short, *must* conceal her affection from the object of it. Though the advice may differ, the spirit in which it is given is the very same: the spirit of fixing, the spirit of securing, the spirit of capturing, the spirit of *entrapment*!

Like Charlotte Lucas, *The Rules* presumes that a woman's aim is to 'rope in' her man, rather as if he had committed a crime (which, indeed, he might as well have done, being, as *The Rules* describes him, 'biologically, the aggressor'). And, as if this were not bad enough, our man-criminal (or 'the adversary,' as he is known in *The Rules*) is to be apprehended not in a direct confrontation of *equals* but in guerrilla fashion, by stealth, as if women are the naturally weaker, *inferior* party. *The Rules'* authors claim first to have heard of their 'time-tested secrets' from a woman called Melanie, a woman who, without being 'extraordinarily pretty or smart or special,' seemed always able to 'snag' her man; and they admit that their first instinct was to be offended, by what seemed to them to be 'downright trickery and manipulation.' What a pity they did not trust to their first instinct! – for, Melanie's 'secrets' would make Charlotte Lucases of us all, using 'every available half-hour' in order to *capture* our man.

And *once* we have 'captured' him? Is there an end to the scheming at least *then*? Is there 'more leisure for falling in love,' as Charlotte says there will be? Not a bit of it! Rule 26 of *The Rules* is: 'Even If You're Engaged or Married, You Still Need *The Rules*!' And Charlotte *Collins* is certainly as manipulative as Charlotte *Lucas* ever was, choosing a sitting room for herself in the house she shares with her husband on the grounds of its being somewhat dingy, so that Mr Collins importunes her with much less of his company than he might have done had she sat somewhere cosy and comfortable. But such convolutions are surely no pattern of marital bliss! 'Poor Charlotte!', Elizabeth says to herself, as she ends her visit to the newly married pair. And so we should all say to ourselves, of the millions of Charlottes who stoop to 'downright trickery' to capture *and to keep* their men!

What is more, *their men* do not fare very much better by their treatment at the hands of *The Rules*, rendered as they are as not only naturally aggressive, as 'the adversary,' but also as apparently witless, wont, at the slightest of encouragements, to direct their amorous attentions this way and then that. If women are all like Charlotte Lucas, then men, as *The Rules* would have them, are all like Mr Collins, whose rapid-fire lovemaking, first to Jane Bennet, then to Elizabeth, and then to Charlotte, makes him utterly ridiculous, fair game for any woman with a few of those tricks up her sleeve. *The Rules* reduces men to a set of biological urges, as if evolution from the ape had barely touched them at all! So long as a woman follows a few simple steps, the *Rules* man is *fixed, secured, captured*.

But enough is enough! With the recent publication of a new and updated version of *The Rules*, it is time for us to call a halt. Charlotte Lucas has had her reign; Mr Collins has had his day. We must stop disgracing ourselves and sinking in our own esteem! We must launch an offensive, against the idea that the game of love is played out at the lowest common denominator, by ape-criminals and the females who

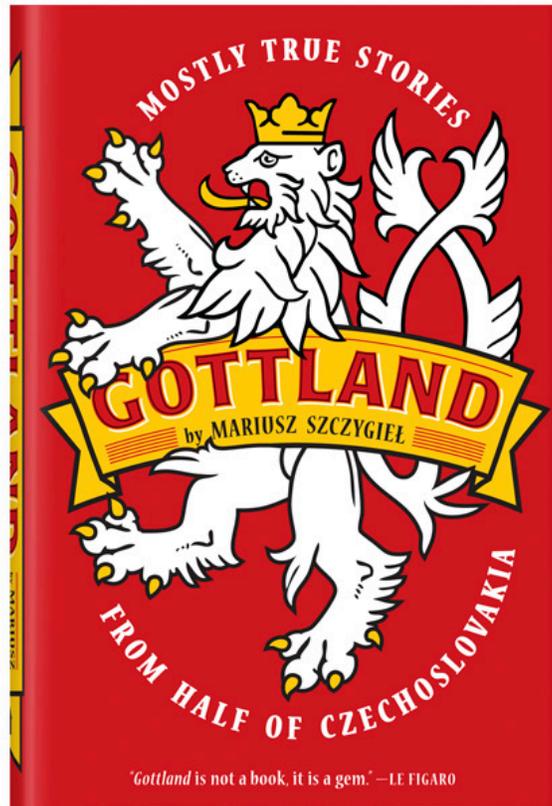
would catch them in their trap! We must resist the notion that a woman concerned with *finding* a man is a woman concerned with *capturing* one!

The Jane Austen Rules by Sinead Murphy will be available on October 14, 2014.

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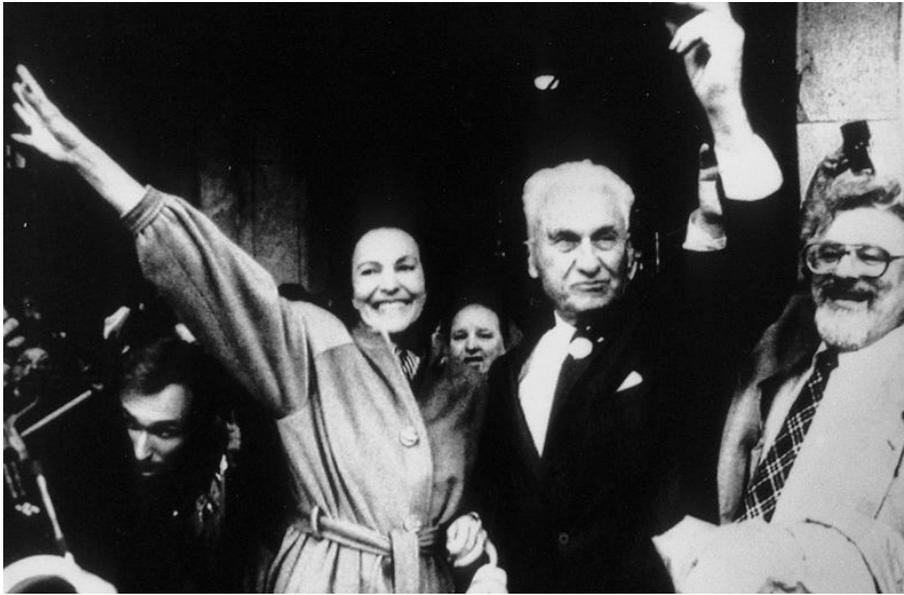


Gottland
Mostly True Stories from Half of Czechoslovakia
Mariusz Szczygieł
Hardcover
9781612193137 | \$25.95 U.S./Can.
May 6, 2014

A cultural history of Czechoslovakia, told through the stories of artists, writers, and performers whose lives were completely and often strangely altered by the various pressures of the times.

“Mariusz Szczygieł was just voted Journalist of the Year in Poland, and Gottland shows you exactly why: in compiling his offbeat history of Czechoslovakia, Szczygieł unearths details and tracks down sources that others might pass by, such as the explosives expert who was given the job of blowing up the world’s largest statue of Stalin in 1962. I loved Gottland because it is in the great tradition of books like Stasiland and Germania, that take on Eastern European history with equal parts serious investigative reporting, an eye for pop-culture phenomena, and a sense of sympathy and admiration for the Czech people, their persistence over the course of a tumultuous century, and—perhaps my favorite part of all—their extremely dry sense of humor.” —Sal Robinson, editor

A list of characters from GOTTLAND:



- Brothers **Tomáš** and **Jan Bata**, who brought Henry Ford's production methods to Czechoslovakia and built an international footwear empire that's still in existence, Bata Shoes. The Batas controlled every aspect of their employees' lives, from designing the houses they lived in to telling them what to read (Russian novels, according to Tomáš, should be avoided because they "killed your joie de vivre"). Born in one of the company's model homes, the daughter of a Bata worker will one day become Ivana Trump.



- **Lída Baarová**, the beautiful Czech movie star who was Goebbel's lover during the war and ended up as a barmaid in Salzburg.



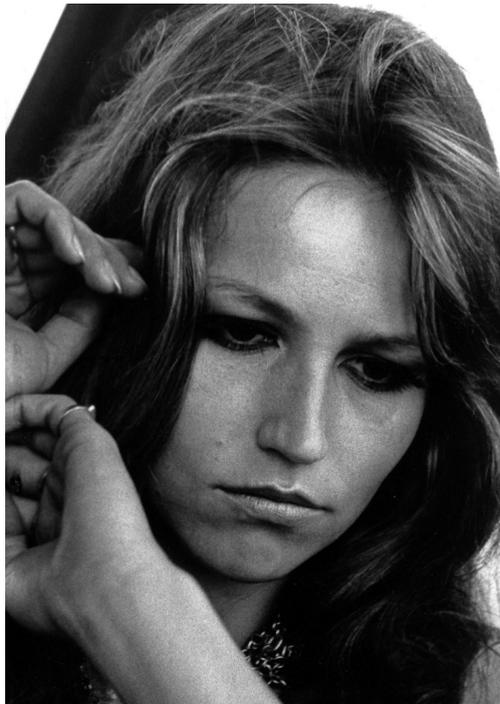
- **Otakar Švec**, the sculptor who, more or less accidentally, won the contest to design the world's largest statue of Stalin . . . and **Jiří Příhoda** (not pictured), the explosives expert who was hired to blow it up in secret in 1962.



- **Věra S.**, Franz Kafka's famously reclusive niece, whom Szczygieł manages to secure an interview with in Prague, after two years of failed attempts.



- **Jan Procházka**, a screenwriter and a hero of the Prague Spring who discovered that his private conversations were being recorded only when they were broadcast on national television in a seven-episode, fourteen-day special.

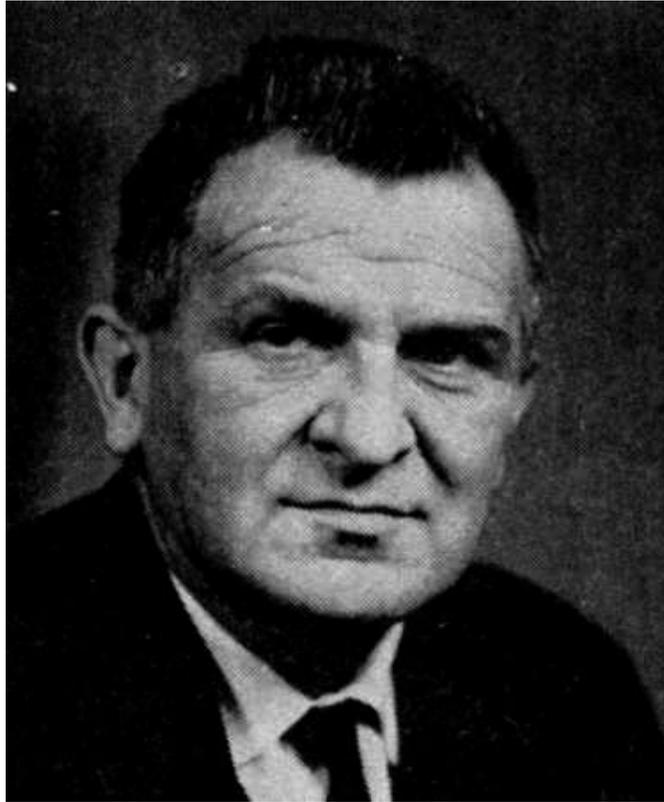


- **Marta Kubišová**, a singer and member of the pop trio the Golden Kids. In 1968, Kubišová recorded a song that became a protest anthem during the Soviet occupation of Prague; in response, the Czech secret service forged and distributed widely a Danish porn magazine called

Hot Kittens with her picture in it (an extremely good color forgery, at a time when most art books only had black-and-white images), as well as banning broadcasts of her music for twenty years. Kubišová was one of the signers of Charter '77, a key document protesting human rights abuses and the lack of political and intellectual freedom under the Communist regime.



- **Karel Gott**, Czechoslovakia's biggest pop star and winner of the Golden Nightingale Award for Best Male Vocalist a total of thirty-six times, in both the Communist and democratic eras. Gott was a prominent signer of the Anti-charter, the document drawn up by the government in opposition to Charter '77. Gottland, the museum dedicated to his life and work, is the Dollywood of the Czech Republic, and every one of the five books about Gott's love life published since 1999 has been a major bestseller.



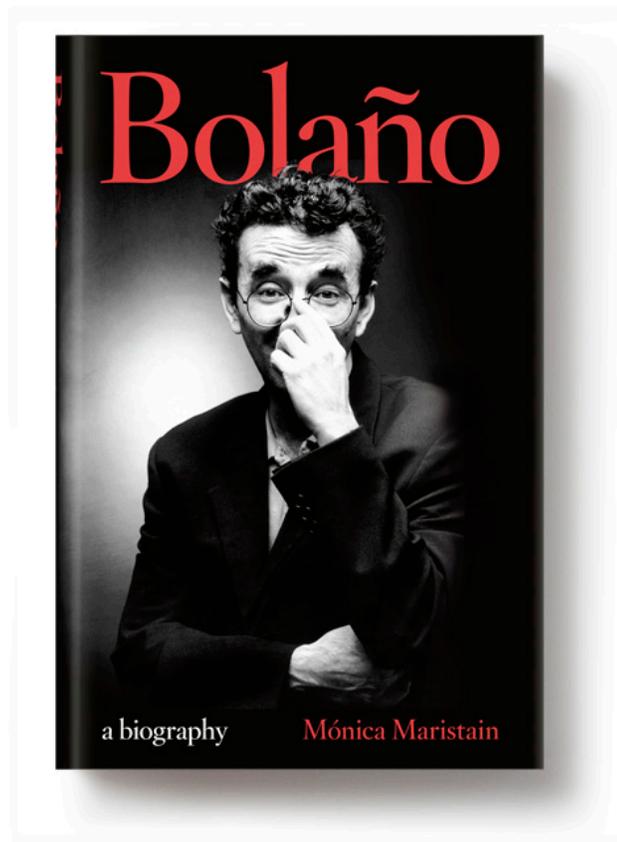
- **Eduard Kirchberger**, the wildly successful author of trashy horror novels, who transformed himself during the Communist era into the wildly successful author of trashy socialist-realist novels
- **Zdeněk Adamec**, a high school student who committed suicide by self-immolation in 2003, protesting against the failures of the democratic state, in the same spot where **Jan Palach**, a philosophy student, lit himself on fire thirty-four years earlier to protest the '68 invasion of the country by the armies of the Warsaw Pact.

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Bolaño

A Biography

Mónica Maristain

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The first biography of the Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño, whose *Savage Detectives* and *2666* were bestsellers around the world. Written by a noted magazine writer, with the cooperation of Bolaño's family and friends.

“Since Roberto Bolaño was first published in English in 2003, a number of myths have attached to the bestselling Chilean novelist. For one, was his death the result of complications of a heroin habit, as had been claimed by friends, publishers, and even Bolaño himself? Moreover, was Bolaño in Chile during the military coup that brought General Augusto Pinochet to power? Enter Mónica Maristain, a former editor of Playboy Mexico and a longtime correspondent and chronicler of Bolaño. The publication of her landmark biography, the first biography of Bolaño to be published, is a major event—the book is deeply sourced and based on interviews with Bolaño friends, family, and colleagues, as well as numerous interviews with the author. He is described by The New York Times as ‘the most significant Latin American literary voice of his generation,’ and Maristain’s biography is sure to generate a new round of interest in the author.” —Kelly Burdick, editor and associate publisher

Excerpt of Mónica Maristain’s interview with Bolaño from *The Last Interview* series:

Interview By Mónica Maristain

In the blurry panorama of Spanish-language literature, a place where young writers each day seem more preoccupied with obtaining scholarships and plum posts at various consulates than contributing to artistic expression, the figure of a lean man stands out, blue backpack at the ready, enormously framed eyeglasses, a never-ending cigarette between his fingers and, whenever there is a shortage, sharp, blunt wit.

Roberto Bolaño, born in Chile in 1953, is the best thing to happen to the writing profession in a long time. Since becoming famous and pocketing the Herralde (1998) and Rómulo Gallegos (1999) prizes for his monumental *The Savage Detectives*, perhaps the great Mexican novel of our time, his influence and stature have grown steadily: Everything he says, with his pointed sense of humor, his exquisite intelligence, and everything he writes, with a sure pen, great poetic risk and profound creative commitment, is worthy of the attention of those who admire and, of course, those who detest him.

The author, who turns up as a character in the novel *Soldiers of Salamis* by Javier Cercas and is paid homage in Jorge Volpi's last novel, *An End to Madness*, is a divider of opinions, like all brilliant men, and a generator of bitter antipathy, despite his tender good nature. His voice is somewhere between high-pitched and hoarse, and like any good Chilean, the one with which he responds is always courteous. He will not write one story more until finishing his next novel, which will be about the murder of countless women in Ciudad Juárez. He is already at 900 pages and not finished yet.

Bolaño lives in Blanes, Spain, and he's very sick. He hopes that a liver transplant will give him the strength to live with the same intensity worshipped by those fortunate enough to address him in private. His friends say he sometimes forgets about his doctor's visits because he's writing.

At fifty years old, Bolaño has crisscrossed Latin America as a backpacker, escaped the clutches of Pinochet because one of his jailers was a classmate in school, lived in Mexico (a section of Bucareli Street will someday bear his name), got to know Farabundo Martí's militants before they assassinated the poet Roque Dalton in El Salvador, kept watch over a Catalanian campground and sold costume jewelry in Europe. Also, he always stole good books because reading is not just a matter of posturing. He has transformed the course of Latin American literature. And he has done it without warning and without asking permission, the way Juan García Madero, adolescent antihero of his glorious *The Savage Detectives*, would have done: "I'm in my first semester of law school. I wanted to study literature, not law, but my aunt insisted and in the end I gave in. I'm an orphan and someday I'll be a lawyer. That's what I told my aunt and uncle, then I shut myself in my room and cried all night." The rest—the remaining pages of the novel—has been compared to Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* and even Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In the face of such hyperbole, he might have said, "No way." Thus, on this occasion, let's get to what's important: the interview.

Monica Maristain: If you hadn't been a writer, what would you have been?

Roberto Bolaño: I would like to have been a homicide detective, much more than being a writer. I am absolutely sure of that. A string of homicides. I'd have been someone who could come back to the scene of the crime alone, by night and not be afraid of ghosts. Perhaps then I might really have become crazy. But being a detective that could easily be resolved with a bullet to the mouth.

M.M.: Have you shed one tear about the widespread criticism you've drawn from your enemies?

R.B.: Lots and lots. Every time I read that someone has spoken badly of me I begin to cry, I drag myself across the floor, I scratch myself, I stop writing indefinitely, I lose my appetite, I smoke less, I engage in sport, I go for walks on the edge of the sea, which by the way is less than 30 meters from my house and I ask the seagulls, whose ancestors ate the fish who ate Ulysses: Why me? Why? I've done you no harm.

M.M.: Which five books have marked your life?

R.B.: In reality the five books are more like 5,000. I'll mention these only as the tip of the spear: *Don Quixote*, by Cervantes; *Moby Dick*, by Melville. The complete works of Borges, *Hopscotch*, by Cortázar, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, by Toole. I should also cite *Nadja* by Breton; the letters of Jacques Vaché. Anything Ubu by Jarry; *Life: A User's Manual*, by Perec. *The Castle* and *The Trial*, by Kafka. *Aphorisms*, by Lichtenberg. *The Tractatus*, by Wittgenstein. *The Invention of Morel*, by Bioy Casares. *The Satyricon*, by Petronius. *The History of Rome*, by Tito Livio. *Pensées*, by Pascal.

M.M.: John Lennon, Lady Di or Elvis Presley?

R.B.: The Pogues. Or Suicide. Or Bob Dylan. Well, but let's not be pretentious: Elvis forever. Elvis and his golden voice, with a sheriff's badge, driving a Mustang and stuffing himself full of pills.

M.M.: Have you seen the most beautiful woman in the world?

R.B.: Yes, sometime around 1984 when I worked at a store. The store was empty and in came a Hindu woman. She looked like a princess and well could have been one. She bought some hanging costume jewelry from me. I was at the point of fainting. She had copper skin, long red hair, and the rest of her was perfect. A timeless beauty. When I had to charge her, I felt embarrassed. As if saying she understood and not to worry, she smiled at me. Then she disappeared and I have never again seen anyone like her. Sometimes I get the impression that she was the goddess Kali, the patron saint of thieves and goldsmiths, except Kali was also the goddess of murderers, and this Hindu woman was not only the most beautiful woman on earth, but she seemed also to be a good person – very sweet and considerate.

M.M.: What do you wish to do before dying?

R.B.: Nothing special. Well, clearly I'd prefer not to die. But sooner or later the distinguished lady arrives. The problem is that sometimes she's neither a lady nor very distinguished, but, as Nicanor Parra says in a poem, she's a hot wench who will make your teeth chatter no matter how fancy you think you are.

M.M.: What kinds of feelings do posthumous works awaken in you?

R.B.: Posthumous: It sounds like the name of a Roman gladiator, an unconquered gladiator. At least that's what poor Posthumous would like to believe. It gives him courage.

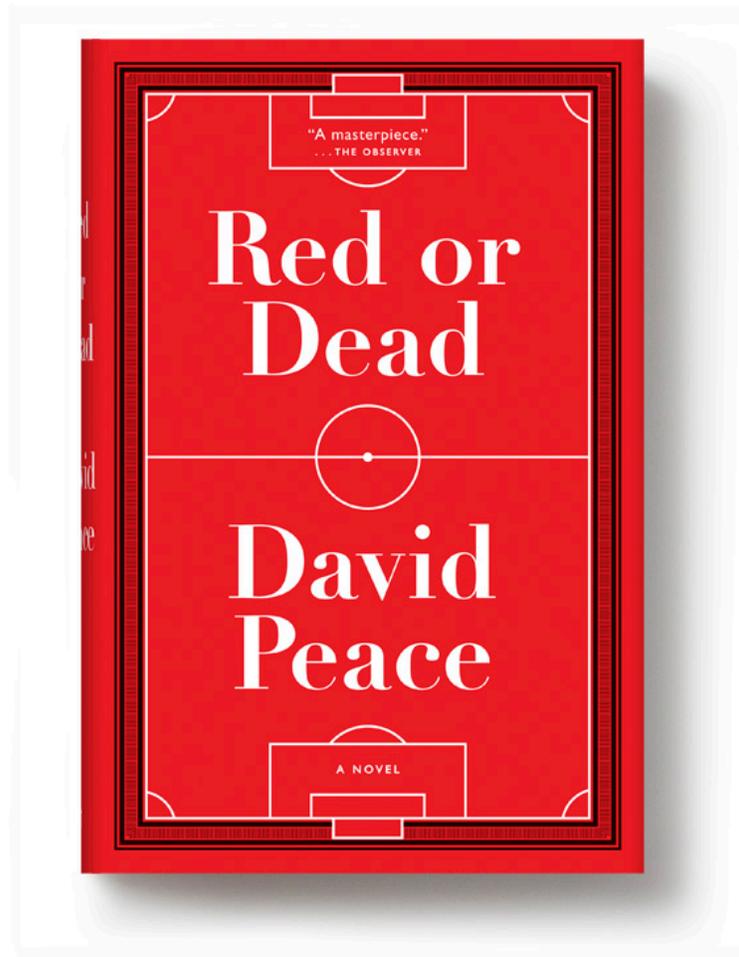
Bolaño by Mónica Maristain will be available on August 26, 2014.

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Major Voices



Red or Dead
A Novel
David Peace
Hardcover
9781612193687 | \$30.00
May 27, 2014

From the bestselling author of *The Damned Utd* and *The Red Riding Quartet*, an amazing novel about ambition, dignity, and a legendary working-class hero.

"Red or Dead is one of those books that gave me tingles when I first read it—something so different from anything I'd ever read before, yet such a classic reading experience (it kept me up late for a week!) that I knew it was going to be a hit. The fictional biography of a real person, it's a stirring tale about a working-class hero—a British soccer coach—who inspires an entire city to stand up to hard times. Whether you care about soccer or not, this novel is going to leave you both moved and inspired." —Dennis Johnson, editor and publisher

"I have written about corruption, I've written about crime, I've written about bad men and I've written about the demons. But now I've had enough of the bad men and the demons. Now I want to write about a good man. And a saint. A Red Saint. Bill Shankly was not just a great football manager. Bill Shankly was one of the greatest men who ever lived. And the supporters of Liverpool Football Club, and the people of Liverpool the city, know that and remember him. But many people outside of football, outside of Liverpool, do not

know or do not remember him. And now—more than ever—it's time everybody knew about Bill Shankly. About what he achieved, about what he believed. And how he led his life. Not for himself, for other people.”
—David Peace

Excerpt from CHAPTERS ONE and TWO:

1. TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US

In the winter-time, in the night-time, they remembered him. And then they came to him. In the winter-time, in the night-time. Not cap in hand, not on bended knee. Not this sort. But still they came. Here to Leeds Road, Huddersfield. Here on October 17, 1959. They came—

In the winter-time, in the night-time. Tom Williams had seen enough. Liverpool Football Club were in the Second Division. They had not won anything since the League title in 1947. And they had never won the FA Cup. Tom Williams telephoned Geoff Twentyman. Geoff Twentyman told Tom Williams the name of the man Liverpool Football Club needed. Tom Williams telephoned Matt Busby. Matt Busby told Tom Williams the name of the man Liverpool Football Club needed. Tom Williams telephoned Walter Winterbottom. Walter Winterbottom told Tom Williams the name of the man Liverpool Football Club needed. Tom Williams had heard enough. Tom Williams telephoned Harry Latham—

In the winter-time, in the night-time.

Tom Williams and Harry Latham drove across the Pennines to Leeds Road, Huddersfield. They did not tell the directors of Huddersfield Town they were coming. They did not ask the directors of Huddersfield Town for complimentary tickets. They did not sit with the directors of Huddersfield Town. At Leeds Road, Huddersfield, Tom Williams and Harry Latham sat as close to the pitch and the home dug-out as they could. Huddersfield Town were playing Cardiff City. But Tom Williams and Harry Latham did not watch Huddersfield Town. They did not watch Cardiff City. They watched the man in the dug-out. The home dug-out. His eyes narrow, his mouth open. Jaw out, neck forward. His arms moving, his fists clenched. Right foot, left foot. Tom Williams and Harry Latham watched this man make every run every player on the pitch made. They watched this man kick every ball every player on the pitch kicked. They watched this man take every free kick. Every corner. And every throw-in. They watched this man make every pass. And every tackle. And Tom Williams and Harry Latham listened to the man in the dug-out. They listened to this man cajoling his players. They listened to this man encouraging his players. And Tom Williams and Harry Latham saw the way the players of Huddersfield Town listened to the man. The way they listened to this man and the way they obeyed this man. His every command and his every instruction. His every word, the voice of God. And after the whistle, the final whistle, Tom Williams and Harry Latham had seen enough and they had heard enough. They knew this man had fought harder and played harder than any man out there on the pitch. And Tom Williams and Harry Latham knew this was the man they needed for Liverpool Football Club. This was the man they wanted for Liverpool Football Club. The only man for Liverpool Football Club—

In the winter-time, in the night-time. The only man.

In the shadows of the hills, in the shadows of the mills. Under the stands and on the slope. Tom Williams and Harry Latham saw the man they needed, the man they wanted. Under the stands, on the slope. Tom Williams and Harry Latham walked towards the man. And Tom Williams said, Good evening, sir. I don't know if you remember me, but my name is Tom Williams and I am the chairman of Liverpool Football Club and this is Harry Latham, one of our directors. I wonder if we might have a word with you, Mr Shankly?

I remember you, said Bill Shankly. And they are not for sale.

Tom Williams smiled. Tom Williams shook his head. And Tom Williams said, We're not here for Law or Wilson. We are here to talk to you, Mr Shankly. We are here to ask you a question.

Then ask it, said Bill Shankly.

Tom Williams said, How would you like to manage the best football club in the country, Mr Shankly?

Why, asked Bill Shankly. Matt Busby packing it in, is he?

Tom Williams smiled again. And Tom Williams said, Very funny, Mr Shankly. But you know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about Liverpool Football Club. How would you like to manage Liverpool Football Club, Mr Shankly?

I thought you didn't want me for your football club, said Bill Shankly. I thought you didn't think I was good enough for Liverpool?

Tom Williams shook his head again. And Tom Williams said, I never said that, Mr Shankly. I never said that.

You didn't need to.

I wasn't the chairman then, Mr Shankly. But I am the chairman now. And so now I'm asking you if you would like to manage Liverpool Football Club, Mr Shankly?

I thought you already had a manager? Mr Taylor? Phil Taylor?

It has not been made public yet. Nothing has been announced yet. But Mr Taylor is not a well man. He has asked me to relieve him of his duties. As I say, nothing has been announced yet, nothing made public yet. But we'd like to sort out something before it is.

Under the stands, on the slope. There was the sound of joking, laughter from the Huddersfield Town dressing room.

We might've lost today, said Bill Shankly. But we're not doing too badly here, you know, Mr Williams?

Tom Williams said, We know that. We can see that. And that's why we want you, Mr Shankly.

Well, said Bill Shankly. I'll not be rushed. But I will consider it.

In the winter-time, in the night-time. Tom Williams held out his hand. And Tom Williams said, Thank you, Mr Shankly. That is all I ask. Goodnight, Mr Shankly. Goodnight.

2. IN NIGHTS OF POSSIBILITY, IN DAYS OF OPPORTUNITY

In their house in Huddersfield. In their kitchen at the table. Bill ate and Bill talked. Firing out his words, wolfing down his tea. Bill ate and Bill talked. But Ness said nothing, Ness ate nothing. Ness put down her knife and her fork on her plate. And Ness got up from the table.

Bill frowned. And Bill said, You've not finished your tea, love.

Ness picked up the plate and walked over to the bin. Ness pushed the meat and the vegetables off the plate and into the bin.

Bill shook his head. And Bill said, What a waste.

Ness walked over to the sink. Ness put the plug in the sink. Ness turned on the taps. Ness put her plate, her knife and her fork on top of the pans in the sink. Ness squeezed washing-up liquid into the sink. Ness turned off the taps. Ness picked up the scrubbing brush. Ness began to wash the plate and the pans. The knife and the fork.

Where is Liverpool, Daddy, asked one of their daughters.

Bill smiled. And Bill said, It's by the seaside, love.

Ness stopped washing the plate and the pans. The knife and the fork. Ness looked up from the sink. Ness stared out into the dark garden. And Ness said, We're settled here. We've got a nice house. We've got good friends. The girls like their schools. They're happy here. I'm happy here. I don't want to leave, love.

Bill said, I know, love. I know.

...

In his car, at the wheel. Driving down this road, driving up that road. Bill saw a telephone box on a corner up ahead. And Bill braked. Suddenly. Bill pulled over. Bill got out of his car. And Bill went into the phone box. Bill took out a piece of paper from the pocket of his coat. Bill dialled the telephone number on the piece of paper. Bill listened to the phone ring. Bill heard a voice answer. Bill dropped two coins into the phone. And Bill said, Mr Williams? This is Bill Shankly.

Good evening, Mr Shankly. What can I do for you?

Bill said, I've been thinking about your offer. I'm very glad to hear that, said Tom Williams. So what have you been thinking, Mr Shankly?

Bill said, I'm interested. But I have a number of conditions.

Go on, Mr Shankly.

Well, I have to have total control of the playing and the coaching staff. I have to decide on the training methods and the playing style. I have to select the team without any interference from you or the directors. And if I feel we need new players, then you and the directors must make the money available for me to buy the players I want. And I also want a salary of £2,500. And so if you cannot accommodate all these conditions, then I'm afraid I'm not interested. May I ask what Huddersfield are paying you, Mr Shankly?

Bill said, £2,000 a year.

Then I think we can accommodate all your conditions, said Tom Williams. I am sure we can, Mr Shankly.

Bill said, Then I accept your offer.

Thank you, said Tom Williams. Then we'll be in touch again. Goodnight, Mr Shankly. Goodnight.

...

In their house in Huddersfield, their home in Huddersfield. In the night and in the silence. In his chair. Bill put down the newspaper. And in the night and in the silence. Bill closed his eyes. Liverpool Football Club had come to Leeds Road, Huddersfield. In the twentieth minute, Les Massie had scored. And Huddersfield Town had won. Liverpool Football Club had lost. Huddersfield Town were sixth in the Second Division. Liverpool Football Club were tenth in the Second Division. But no one was happy. Ten days before, Phil Taylor had announced his resignation as manager of Liverpool Football Club. Bill remembered his words. The words Bill had read in the newspaper. Bill could not forget his words. Phil Taylor had said, In my opinion, the club has enjoyed reasonable success. My three years have resulted in a third and two fourth-place positions. However, the strain of it all has proved too much for me. And so, great as my love is for Liverpool Football Club, I have decided to resign. I made promotion my goal. I set my heart on it. I strove for it with all my energy. But such striving was not enough. Now the time has come to hand over to someone else.

In the night and in the silence. In his chair. Bill opened his eyes again. The grapevine was alive with rumours. Rumours that Liverpool Football Club wanted Bill Shankly to be their new manager. Rumours Liverpool Football Club had denied. In his chair. Bill picked up the newspaper again. Mr Lawson Martindale, one of the senior directors of Liverpool Football Club, had said, Any names mentioned in connection with the vacancy are only conjecture. There is no certainty about the matter. Nor can there be until we have examined all the applications. We particularly desire secrecy. And we are hopeful that we shall have many first-class men seeking the job. But we do not wish to cause them, or their clubs, any embarrassment.

...

In the ground at Leeds Road, before the door to the Huddersfield Town boardroom. Bill touched his tie, Bill straightened his tie. And then Bill knocked on the door to the boardroom.

Come, said a voice from behind the door. Bill opened the door. Slowly. Bill stepped into the boardroom.

Sit, said Stephen Lister, the chairman of Huddersfield Town.

Bill walked to a chair at the end of a long table. Bill sat down in the chair. Bill looked up the long table at Stephen Lister and the directors of Huddersfield Town Football Club. Bill coughed. And then Bill said, This will be my last weekly report. I have received an offer from Liverpool Football Club. And I have decided to accept their offer.

Stephen Lister and the other directors did not speak.

Bill coughed again. And then Bill said, I realise that this may come as something of a shock to you all. But I have decided to go because I would like to take up the challenge of managing a big club in a big city. And Liverpool Football Club is a big club in a big city.

The chairman and the directors still said nothing.

Bill coughed. And then Bill said, But I want you to know I have taken this decision very reluctantly. I have enjoyed my time in Huddersfield. And the club has always been very good to me.

Stephen Lister and the directors looked at each other. They patted their bellies, they stroked their chins. They began to mutter, they began to whisper. This name and that name.

I wonder if Harry Catterick would be interested in coming here, said Hayden Battye. A decent chap, I hear . . .

Bill laughed. Bill shook his head. And Bill said, Harry Catterick? But Wednesday are a much bigger club than this. I think the very least you could do, said Stephen Lister, is to give us one month's notice, Shankly. You will continue in your duties until the end of the month, until the end of December.

Bill said, Fine. If that is what you want.

Close the door on your way out.

...

In the corridor, outside his office at Leeds Road. Bill saw Eddie Brennan, the assistant club secretary of Huddersfield Town. And Bill said, I've got something to tell you, Eddie. Something to tell you. I'm leaving, Eddie. I've been offered the Liverpool job and I've accepted it. So I'm leaving, Eddie. I'm off, I'm off. And I can't wait, Eddie. I can't wait. A big club, Eddie. A massive club. So much potential, Eddie. So much potential. You've been there, Eddie. You know. That crowd, Eddie. That city. What a crowd, Eddie! What a city! And they're going to back me, Eddie. The board. They're going to back me all the way, Eddie. Give me all the money I need. Not like here, Eddie. Not like this place. Never be anything, Eddie. This place. No potential, Eddie. No ambition. No money, Eddie. Nothing. Same with Carlisle, same with Grimsby. Same with Workington, same as here. Not like Liverpool, Eddie. What a club! What a city, Eddie! All that potential, all that ambition. I tell you, Eddie. I've been waiting my whole life for this. My whole life, Eddie. For a chance like this. It's the chance of a lifetime, Eddie. The bloody chance of a lifetime. And I can't wait, Eddie. I just can't wait. So what do you think, Eddie?

We'll miss you, said Eddie Brennan. I know that, Bill.

Bill said, And I'll miss you, Eddie. I will. But you've got to go where the work is, Eddie. Where you are wanted. Where you will be appreciated, Eddie. Appreciated and supported.

I supported you, said Eddie Brennan. And I appreciated you.

Bill nodded. And Bill said, I know that, Eddie. I know that. And I appreciated you, Eddie. I did. And I do, Eddie. I really do.

And I believed you, too, said Eddie Brennan.

...

In the boardroom at Leeds Road, at the long table. Bill and Stephen Lister sat down before the local press—Isn't it true you've simply had a bellyful, asked the reporter from the *Huddersfield Examiner*. A bellyful of walking a financial tightrope, Bill? Of trying for promotion while balancing the books? Isn't that the reason you're off to Liverpool, Bill? Because you've had a bellyful of Huddersfield Town?

Bill shook his head. And Bill said, No. It's going to be a wrench to say goodbye. My wife and family have made more friends in Huddersfield than in any other town we've ever lived in before. It was certainly a bolt from the blue, said Stephen Lister.

It was the very last thing we were expecting. But Mr Shankly put his position before the board and, after expressing our regret at the prospect of losing his services, we have agreed that Mr Shankly shall join Liverpool Football Club. Mr Shankly has no contract with Huddersfield Town, but he considers it only fair to the club that he should stay at Leeds Road for a month in order to give us the opportunity of making a new appointment before he leaves us. Liverpool are getting a good man. Thank you.

...

In the boardroom at Leeds Road, before the chairman. Bill touched his tie. And Bill said, You wanted to see me, Mr Lister?

There is no point you hanging around here like a spare part, said Stephen Lister. Not now everyone knows you're going. If you wish to go to Liverpool now, then you can go. We'll not stand in your way, Shankly. We'll not hold you to your month's notice.

Bill held out his hand. And Bill said, Thank you, Mr Lister.

Close the door on your way out, Shankly.

...

In another boardroom, at another long table. Bill and Tom Williams sat down before the local press. And Horace Yates, from the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and Leslie Edwards, from the *Liverpool Echo*, opened their notebooks, took out their pens and waited—

Gentlemen, said Tom Williams. The board of Liverpool Football Club would like to announce that all applications for the position of manager have been considered. Of the small number who came up to the

requirements, the board decided to ascertain the services of Mr William Shankly, of Huddersfield Town FC, and have offered the management to him.

Bill nodded. Bill smiled. And then Bill said, I am very pleased and proud to have been chosen as manager of Liverpool Football Club. Liverpool is a club of great potential. I have known Mr Williams a long time and I have always considered him to be one of football's gentlemen. He has been at Liverpool Football Club since the club began. He is devoted to Liverpool Football Club. And I am confident that we will be able to work well together. It is my opinion that Liverpool have a crowd of followers which ranks with the greatest in the game. They deserve success and I hope in my small way to be able to do something towards helping them achieve it. But I make no promises except that, from the moment I take over, I shall put everything I have into the job I so willingly undertake. This appointment is a challenge for me. I rank it similar to that confronting Joe Mercer when he left Sheffield United for Aston Villa. Or when Alan Brown left Burnley to go to Sunderland. These clubs, like Liverpool, are amongst the top-grade teams in the football land. So when the challenge was made to me, I simply could not refuse to accept it. There is a job to be done. Perhaps a big job. But with the cooperation of Mr Williams, the directors and staff, I feel certain we shall see the task through together. I am not a lazy man. I like to get down to it and set the example which I want following from the top of the club to the bottom. I make few promises. But one of them is that, in everything I do, I hope there will be patent common sense attached to it. Common sense and hard work. Together, hard work and common sense bring success. That is what I believe. In football and in life.

How would Mr Shankly reflect on his time as manager of Huddersfield Town, asked Horace Yates, from the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Would he say he had been a success at Huddersfield?

Bill nodded again. And Bill said, Yes, I would. When I took over at Huddersfield three years ago, I had only a team of boys to go to work on. Indeed, they are still boys, most of them. I would not be human if I were not pleased with the way in which players like Law, McHale, Massie and Wilson have advanced under my direction. I guided them from their junior beginnings to League football. My signings have been Ray Wood of Manchester United, who I consider to be the best goalkeeper in the Second Division, and Derek Haworth. I don't think either of them have let me down. I believe I am leaving Huddersfield Town in a better, stronger position than when I took over three years ago and so I consider that to be a success. That I have been a success at Huddersfield. And I hope they would agree.

But the burning ambition of every Liverpool supporter, said Leslie Edwards, from the *Liverpool Echo*, is to see this football club restored to the First Division. How do you feel about that?

Bill nodded. And Bill said, Nobody realises more than I do what a tough job that is likely to be. But I have gained a lot of experience of Second Division football and so I know the difficulties. But I think we can do it. In fact, I know we can do it.

...

In their house in Huddersfield, in the bedroom. Bill waited for the dawn, Bill waited for the light. And Bill got out of bed. Bill shaved, Bill washed. Bill put on his suit, Bill put on his tie. And Bill went downstairs. Bill ate breakfast with Ness and their daughters. Bill kissed them goodbye. Bill went out of the house, Bill got into his car. And Bill drove across the Pennines. Past Manchester—

Into Liverpool. To Anfield.

In the ground, in the office. Bill shook hands with Jimmy McInnes, the club secretary. Bill knew Jimmy McInnes. Bill knew Jimmy came from Ayr. Bill knew Jimmy had played for Third Lanark and for Liverpool Football Club. Jimmy introduced Bill to the receptionist, the ticket administrators, the cleaners and the groundsman, Arthur Riley. Bill knew Arthur Riley. Bill knew Arthur had worked for Liverpool Football Club for over thirty years. Arthur took Bill to meet the coaching staff. Under the stands, down a corridor. Among the boots, the dirty boots—

This is Bob Paisley, said Arthur Riley. Bob is the first-team trainer. This is Joe Fagan. Joe is in charge of the reserves. This is Reuben Bennett. Reuben takes most of the training. And this is Albert Shelley. Albert used to be the first-team trainer. He's supposed to be retired. But Albert still comes in every day. Albert does whatever needs doing. Albert does everything and anything. Bill nodded. And Bill said, I know Bob. Me and Bob played against each other on many occasions. We had many a good scrap. And I know Joe. I tried to sign Joe when I was at Grimsby and he was at Manchester City. I know Reuben. Reuben used to work with my brother Bob at Dundee. And I know Albert. I know he lives and breathes Liverpool Football Club. I

know you all do. And so I know you men are all good men. True football men. But I also know you fellows have all been here a long time. And so I know you'll all be worried about me coming in. A new feller with new ways. Different ways. Maybe wanting to bring in new trainers with him. His mates. Well, I'm not going to do that. But I do have my ways. My methods and my systems. And they will be different ways. But I am here to work with you. Not against you. I am here to work in cooperation with you. As a team. And so gradually I will lay down my plans and then gradually we will be on the same wavelength. And, in return, I ask for only one thing. Loyalty. I want loyalty. So I don't want anybody to carry stories about anyone else. The man who brings the story to me will be the man who gets the sack. I don't care if he's been here fifty years. He'll be the one who goes. Because I want everyone to be loyal to each other. To the team. And to the club. So everything we do will be for Liverpool Football Club. Not for ourselves. Not as individuals. But for the team. For Liverpool Football Club. Total loyalty. That is all I ask. Because that loyalty makes strength. And that strength will bring success. I promise you.

...

In their house in Huddersfield, in their kitchen. Bill and Ness cleared the table. Bill and Ness washed the pots. And then Ness made a cup of tea for her and Bill. Bill and Ness took their cups of tea into the other room. Bill and Ness sat down with their cups of tea. In front of the television. And Bill said, So how was your day then, love?

Mine was fine, said Ness. But how was yours?

Bill nodded. And Bill said, It went well, love. It went well. Thank you, love. They are all good men.

That's good then, said Ness.

Bill said, Aye.

But it's a long drive, said Ness. You must be tired, love.

Bill nodded again. And Bill said, It is, love. And I am a bit tired. But it's a good city, love. More like a Scottish city. Good people, love. Like Scottish people. I can tell, love. Like Glasgow. So I think you'd like it, love. And the girls would, too.

Yes then, said Ness. I'd like to go over, love. To have a look then. And maybe even look at some houses, love. If you have time? Bill smiled. And Bill said, Aye. On Sunday then.

...

In Liverpool, at Anfield. Bill walked around the ground with Arthur Riley. Bill looked at the turnstiles and Bill looked at the stands. Bill looked at the seats and Bill looked at the toilets. Bill looked at the dressing rooms and Bill looked at the tunnel. And then Bill walked out onto the pitch. The Anfield pitch. Bill stood on the pitch, Bill stamped on the pitch. Once, twice. Bill shook his head. Once, twice. And Bill said, How do you water this pitch, Arthur? Where do you keep your watering equipment?

There isn't any, said Arthur Riley. There's no water.

Bill said, No water? So what do you do?

There's a tap in the visitors' dressing room, said Arthur Riley. We run a pipe from there out here.

Bill looked down at the pitch. The Anfield pitch, the Anfield grass. Frozen and bare, hard and barren. Bill shook his head again. And Bill said, You run a pipe? That's no bloody good, is it? I know, said Arthur Riley. But what can we do?

Bill said, We can fix it. We can buy some bloody equipment. That's what we can do, Arthur.

I've been saying that for years, said Arthur Riley. But there's no money. No money here.

Bill smiled. And Bill said, Leave that to me. I'll get you the money, Arthur. Trust me.

I do, said Arthur Riley. You're the Boss.

Bill smiled again. And Bill said, I am. Now let's you and me go and have a look at the training ground. Let's go out to Melwood.

You're not going to like it, said Arthur Riley. You're not going to be happy, Boss. I can tell you that for nothing.

Bill shrugged. And Bill said, How bad can it be, Arthur? It can't be any worse than this place, can it?

...

In Liverpool, in the car. Bill and Ness drove from house to house. This house for sale and that house for sale. This house too big, that house too small. Outside the last house, back in the car. Bill shook his head. And Bill said, I'm sorry, love. That was a waste of time.

No it wasn't, said Ness. There's no rush, love. Better to find the right house than any old house. Better to take our time, better to wait, love. And at least we can have Christmas in Huddersfield. Bill nodded. And Bill said, Yes. With our friends.

On their way back home, home to Huddersfield. Bill stopped the car at Melwood in West Derby. Bill and Ness got out of the car. It was cold and it was dark. There were trees and there were bushes. There were hills and there were hollows. There was an air-raid shelter and there was a cricket pitch. There was an old wooden pavilion. In the cold and in the dark. Bill and Ness stood in the middle of the training pitch. They felt the long grass and the uneven ground beneath their feet. Bill shook his head again. And Bill said, What do you think, love? Have I made a mistake in coming here? A big mistake, love?

No, you haven't, said Ness. You want to get into the First Division. You want to win the League. You want to win the Cup. So this is your chance. The chance you have been waiting for. The chance you have been working for. Your whole life. You are not a coward. And you are not a shirker. So you will do it, love. I know you will.

Praise from the UK:

"David Peace brings perfect pitch to this ode to Bill Shankly's Liverpool reign." —Frank Cottrell Boyce, *The Observer*

"*Red or Dead* is a masterpiece. David Peace already has a considerable reputation but this massive, painstaking account of the career of Bill Shankly towers above his previous work. It's usual when praising a sports novel for critics to claim that 'it's not really about baseball/running/beach volleyball—the sport is a metaphor.' Make no mistake, this book is about football. Unremittingly, uncompromisingly about football. It's what Shankly would have wanted. For Shankly, ephemera such as life, love and death could be metaphors for football, never the other way round. Football was the thing itself.

"*Red or Dead* tells the story of how an unambitious, conservative board of directors, concerned only with ensuring a profit clicked through the turnstiles, inadvertently hired a charismatic, visionary socialist who revolutionised the game and would like to have revolutionised the nation. Inexplicably—maybe he was bluffing—Shankly tendered his resignation in 1974 while still only 60, and at the height of his success. On YouTube you can find a clip of the young Granada reporter Tony Wilson breaking the news to passersby in Liverpool. They're disbelieving and heartbroken. The board too were disbelieving—in the sense that they couldn't believe their luck. In retirement Shankly was cast aside, made more welcome at Goodison Park than at Anfield. He had no role in the future of the club he created. The phone never stopped ringing but it was never the call he hoped for. Peace gives the rejection of Shankly a Shakespearean grandeur. There are echoes of Coriolanus and Lear but also of the experience of every Premier League fan. For of all the forms of love there are in this world there is none so cruelly, gleefully unrequited as the love of a fan for a Premier League club. Fans will go to the grave decked in club scarves, the club anthem their eternal ringtone. Clubs reciprocate that love in ways that make Enron look like the Salvation Army. The Premier League is not a metaphor of a dysfunctional society, it is its fullest expression—a grotesquely overpaid, underperforming elite utterly disconnected from the communities from which its clubs take their names.

"Of course, it wasn't like that in Shankly's time. Part of the appeal of *Red or Dead* is our collective yearning for those 'jumpers for goalposts' days so beautifully evoked in Gary Imlach's book *My Father and Other Working Class Football Heroes*. Here is Shankly living modestly, close to the ground, working out his strategy with cutlery on the kitchen table, cleaning the cooker to clear his mind. Here he is replying to every piece of fan mail, answering the door to kids who want him to come and referee for them, giving them their bus fare home. Here he stops the team's official bus to pick up hitchhiking away fans, ordering his players to share their sandwiches with them. Is this nostalgia? We live in a country in which huge chunks of the public utilities and infrastructure are run for the benefit not of the nation or the customers but for shareholders slumped in front of Antiques Roadshow. Is it nostalgia to remind ourselves that there was

once a man who ran a football club not for the sponsors, not for the board, not for himself but for the fans—or, as he called them, the People? And that this worked?

“There have been more successful managers. Shankly’s not even the most successful manager of LFC. The difference between Shankly and, say, Paisley or Ferguson is the difference between Jesse Owens and Carl Lewis. Lewis ran faster but Owens ran for a reason. Shankly’s reasons could not be more relevant. *Red or Dead* is radical not just in the narrow political sense. I can’t think when I last came across a serious piece of fiction or TV drama in which the working-class characters weren’t busy killing or abusing one another. Peace himself wrote the novel on which the beyond-parody C4 series *Red Riding* (aka ‘Gritty Bafta’) was based. Here he has changed tack and written a book about what it means to be good, about the sheer work it takes to be good, about the challenge of staying good when the world treats you badly. Like the *Book of Job* or *The Little Princess*, it’s a game of two halves. Will Shankly retain as an outcast the grace and integrity he showed when he was a deity? There’s a heartbreaking scene in a cafe on Eaton Road. It’s raining outside. He hands a stranger his umbrella, not out of magnanimity but out of respect for the fact that the man has to go to work whereas he himself has time to sit and wait for the rain to stop.

“This is an openly hagiographical work. There are scenes here of Shankly remembering each of his players in his prayers, almost as shocking to the modern reader as Leopold Bloom masturbating must have been to the reader of nearly 100 years ago. Like most hagiographies, it’s monumental. Team sheets, match reports, the full texts of interviews with Harold Wilson and Shelley Rohde, everything is in here. I didn’t feel qualified to say whether it was all accurate so I went to visit my friend Peter Hooton—one of the founders of the Liverpool supporters’ union the Spirit of Shankly—who said the only mistake he could find was that they keep leaving the ‘k’ out of Kirkby. This level of detail, coupled with Peace’s usual schtick of short, repetitive phrases can make the book a tough read. ‘In the ninth minute, Ian St John scored. In the 72nd minute, Roger Hunt scored. In the last minute, in the very last minute, St John scored again.’

“When it’s good it sounds like Homer. When it’s bad it sounds like an infinity of goal alerts. I know that when my dad reads it he will gorge himself on that exhaustive list of remembered goals but others will find it too much. The temptation to skip pages is enormous. I asked Peter, as a football fan, what he thought. He said: ‘I want to go out and knock on doors like a Jehovah’s Witness and read this book to people.’ Which is surely the point. For a long time now literary fiction has concerned itself with telling it like it is—with power, corruption and lies—or telling it like it was—Tudors. This isn’t a book about the way things were or the way things are. This is a book about the way things should be.”

Red or Dead by David Peace will be available on May 27, 2014.

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Wittgenstein Jr.

Lars Iyer

Hardcover

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September 2, 2014

A new novel by the critically acclaimed author of the celebrated trilogy that includes *Spurious*, *Dogma*, and *Exodus*, and who was shortlisted for the 2013 Goldsmiths Prize.

“What I loved about Lars Iyer’s newest book is the way he’s taken a classic form—novels about the academy—and stood it on its head. Wittgenstein Jr. magically combines the raucous hilarity of Animal House with a stirring plot about a young man from poor circumstances who seeks to embrace a life of the mind at the exalted institution he’s somehow gotten into. When the young man falls in love with his professor, the book becomes something quite special—and quite moving—indeed.” —Dennis Johnson, editor and publisher

Excerpt:

Wittgenstein’s been teaching us for two weeks now.

Whose idea was it to call him Wittgenstein? Doyle’s? Scroggins’s?

He has a Wittgensteinian aura, we agree. He is *Wittgensteinisch*, in some way.

Our lecturer doesn’t *look* like Wittgenstein, of course. He’s tall, whereas the real Wittgenstein was small. He’s a bit podgy, whereas the real Wittgenstein was thin. And if he’s foreign—European in some sense – he’s not Austrian, like the real Wittgenstein, and he has barely the trace of an accent.

But our Wittgenstein has clearly modelled himself on the real Wittgenstein, Okulu says, who knows about these things. He dresses like Wittgenstein, for one thing—the jacket and open-necked shirt; the watchstrap protruding from his pocket. And he behaves a bit like him, too—his intensity—his brow being

more furrowed than any we've ever seen; his impatience—he almost made Titmuss *cry* when he glared at him for coming in late; his visible despair. And he is like the real Wittgenstein in his claim that he came to Cambridge University to do *fundamental work in philosophical logic*.

His teaching. He sits on a wooden chair at the top of the room, bent forward, with his elbows on his knees. His gaze is directed downwards. His eyebrows are raised, and his forehead furrowed. He has the appearance of a man in *prayer* (Titmuss). Of a *constipated* man (Mulberry).

He doesn't *prepare* his teaching. He doesn't *lecture from notes*. He wants simply to *think aloud about certain problems*, he says. Sometimes, he produces a scrap of paper from his pocket and reads out a phrase, or a sentence. Sometimes he uses the blackboard resting on the mantelshelf to jot down a word or two.

Written on the blackboard in the first week: *Denken ist schwer*. Thought is hard. Written on the blackboard in the second: *Everything is what it is, and not another thing*. Written on the blackboard today: *I will teach you differences*.

*

None of us understand the problems with which he is wrestling. None of us can follow the *method* of his teaching.

What is he looking for? What does he seek? Not all of us care. Benwell is drawing cocks in his notebook. Guthrie wears sunglasses over closed eyes. Titmuss groaned audibly when Wittgenstein asked him a question.

*

When will he actually say something? When will he present an *actual argument*?

He proceeds from one concrete case to another. From one example to another. What is the relevance of his examples? Of what *are* they examples? And if they are not examples—what are they?

Okulu puts his hand up in the air.

OKULU (humbly): I'm having trouble following the argument.

WITTGENSTEIN: It isn't my intention to present an argument. Philosophy has nothing to do with arguments.

OKULU (solicitously): I don't understand. I can't follow your class.

WITTGENSTEIN: I have no intention of making myself generally understood.

OKULU (imploringly): I have no idea what's going on.

WITTGENSTEIN: that is to the good. One should, at this stage, have no idea what is going on.

He is saying nothing complicated, Wittgenstein says. His goal is the *obvious*, he says. His aim is to point to *obvious truths*. *A change of attitude*: that's what he wants. In *his* attitude. In *our* attitude. In the end, he's saying nothing out of the ordinary. It is a question of *showing* us something. Of showing us what we already know.

But no one is convinced. Mulberry raises his hand once again.

DOYLE (humbly): But if it is so obvious, then why is it so hard to understand?

WITTGENSTEIN: Because something stands between us and what is obvious. Because the obvious has become very difficult of access. The obvious is not obvious for us, that's the trouble.

DOYLE: Perhaps we aren't bright enough to follow you.

WITTGENSTEIN: Intelligence is nothing. *Cleverness* is nothing. We are all *clever*, he says. It is *pride* that is our obstacle.

Wittgenstein looks up, surveys the room. Pride: that must be our enemy as students of philosophy, he says. For pride leads us to believe that we are something we are not.

Pride. Does he see it in us? He looks carefully at our faces. We believe ourselves *clever*, he can see that. We believe ourselves to be full of *Cambridge cleverness*. But that means we're also exposed to the danger of *Cambridge pride*.

We must not think we can hide, he says, scrutinizing our faces. The inner life reveals itself in the outer life, he says. It cannot help but do so. The secrets of the inner life are written on the face, he says. They reveal themselves in the simplest gesture. The way you sit on your chair: this, too, reveals the strengths and weaknesses of a student of philosophy... The way you button or unbutton your jacket . . .

A pause.

We must learn to read the face, he says, just as much as we learn to read the page. We must learn to read the *gesture*.

Do we think that he's here only to teach us logic? Life—he's here to teach us about life, he says. About moral life. Aesthetic life. About life that is not life, he says. About our lives—or what we call lives.

He needs to take a walk, Wittgenstein says. He needs to *wash off his brain*. Who would like to accompany him on his walk to *wash off his brain*?

Q&A with Lars Iyer from literary magazine [Fullstop](#):

BEHOLD THE IDIOT
THE FULL STOP PATHOS QUESTIONNAIRE

How has your decision to write affected your health? Has it had negative effects on your personal life?

“To lead a really spiritual life while physically and psychologically healthy is altogether impossible. One’s sense of well-being runs away with one”: that’s what Kierkegaard writes in his journals. Could the same be said about leading a really literary life? On the face of it, novel-writing requires a sustained effort that depends upon a basic mental and physical well-being. But there are writers who have distrusted such well-being, subjecting themselves instead to a programme of self-induced suffering. I am not thinking here of Rimbaud’s determination to systematically derange his senses, or Nick Land’s “fanatically prolonged artificial insomnia,” but of writers who have sought to bear the burden of the suffering of others.

“My solitude held in its grasp the grief of others until my death”: that’s how Simone Weil’s tombstone reads. In the last months of her life, Weil wrote her famous texts on affliction and attention, on gravity and grace, with what one commentator calls “almost supernatural steadiness, rapidity, and assurance,”

page after page streaming out virtually without hesitations or corrections. She often worked around the clock, staying through the night in the office in Hill Street or walking home long after the last Underground train and continuing to work in her apartment for several more hours, all the while coughing steadily and violently. The force and substance of her life were poured in an almost literal way into the writing that filled her notebooks[....]The physical collapse that occurred on April 15, 1943, was surprising only in having been so long in coming. Weil had written herself to the brink of death.

Weil sets an example of a practice of writing which works against your health, keeping the thought of the suffering of others immediately to hand.

Alas, my health is all too robust, and I am far from holding the grief of others in my grasp! But I think of Weil’s example when I deal in my novels with topics like climate change and social inequality.

Has writing affected my personal life? I have always admired those authors who embed their writing in the everyday. I think of Aharon Appelfeld, writing in cafés. “I never made a fuss about my writing,” he says,

Everything I wrote was in cafés, mostly quiet cafés, but also in bustling, crowded cafés. It never bothers me when people talk. Many writers have tortured their families because the noise made it difficult for them to concentrate[...] I have a great deal of respect for an artist who doesn't impose his moods on those around him. Writing is a struggle, and it should be between you and yourself, without involving additional people.

I hope I don't impose my moods on anyone around me! Writing literary fiction today is a marginal activity, a petty thing. This makes literary self-importance even more revolting ...

There is long tradition that links the craft of writing with poverty. Do you think that's appropriate? Does poverty feel like the most appropriate condition for your practice as a writer?

I worked as a part-time lecturer for many years, supplementing a meagre wage with government benefits. I was one of the 'precariat'—a very common experience for beginning academics. This places your sympathies with the exploited—with the unemployed and underemployed. It puts you on the side of those who do not have ready-made channels to success, who lack powerful connections.

I write of these conditions in *Exodus*, having my characters celebrate the honest misery of the postgraduate and the postdoctoral researcher over the privileged life of the university lecturer. The fabled postgraduates of Essex, so admired by my characters, lived on the margins of British society in the 1980s, feeling acutely the impossibility of reconciling themselves with that society. This was the condition of their own creativity, my characters think. “A creator who isn't grabbed round the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator”: Deleuze and Guattari write that. I'm not sure if I could say that I was grabbed round the throat by a set of impossibilities as a part-time lecturer and before, but I was no creator, not then at least. I found the stress of living as one of the 'precariat' too great for any sustained task of writing.

In a rare 1983 interview the enigmatic and often dour Romanian writer Emil Cioran speaks about only reading Nietzsche's letters because he became concerned with how untruthful Nietzsche's published works seemed when read against the miserable condition of his day to day existence (isolated, weak, sickly, certainly not characterized by any sense of vigor). Is there any sense in which the truth of one's condition should be related to the truth of one's writing, even if in an oblique sense?

Cioran does not take Nietzsche at his word. ‘Each time I had been weeping too much on my walks the day before, not sentimental tears, but tears of rejoicing; and as I wept I sang and talked nonsense, filled with a new vision ...’: that's Nietzsche. Are Nietzsche's sufferings genuinely *tragic*, leading him to profound insights, to tears of rejoicing, or are they merely petty, belying his lofty claims in the manner Cioran suggests?

For Philip Larkin, a commentator notes, “what's saddest of all is that life is less than tragic. Indeed, to his mind, tragedy is secretly a modality of hope, for the extremity of complaint is seen as a sort of covert refuge whereby our suffering is accorded a significance it doesn't deserve and thus surreptitiously 'redeemed.’” Larkin's task is perhaps similar to Cioran's: to write of *non-tragic* suffering, mundane and unignorable.

But we needn't follow Cioran's brand of nihilism. The philosopher Levinas often quotes Pascal: “That is my place in the sun”: that's how the usurpation of the world began'. We are usurpers, Levinas claims, because the place we occupy, the life we enjoy, is lived at the expense of others. We do not have to subscribe to the details of Levinas's philosophy to grant him this point. Before Nietzsche's would-be tragic suffering, before

Larkin's less-than-tragic suffering, there is the suffering of others, of those whose place you've usurped. Doesn't any account of the 'truth of one's condition' have to include these others?

For me, Weil's practice of writing is exemplary when it comes to truth-telling. For a writer like Weil, the days of ruin and devastation are always at hand. Our time is always apocalyptic, and we are each responsible for the apocalypse. The literary task lies in marking this 'end of times' in our work. I think of something Gillian Rose quoted in her writings: "Keep your mind in hell and despair not."

Are you envious of other people's success? If so, are you more envious of people's success in your field or outside of it? Why?

I've just finished watching the fifth season of *Mad Men*, and envy those involved in the show—the story editors, scriptwriters and actors the very life of their medium. People *talk* about *Mad Men* and series like it! They *look forward* to the release of the DVD boxset; they share it with their friends.

How unlike the world of contemporary literary fiction, at least as I experience it! Does anyone actually *read* literary novels anymore—*new* novels? Does anyone talk about them outside university literature departments (or even inside university literature departments)?

Of course, there are breakout successes in literary fiction—but they never remotely resemble anything I write! For that reason, I don't feel envious of more successful literary-fiction writers. I don't feel they have anything to do with me, and I feel a general sense of disconnection from the literary world.

Aside from writing, do you have any other marketable skills? If so, are you ever tempted to cease writing fiction entirely so you can live a more stable life?

I have all the stability I need: I work full-time as a philosophy lecturer, writing fiction on the side.

Give one example in which you had high hopes for success (artistic, commercial, or otherwise) but had those hopes dashed.

I did have some modest hopes as a philosopher—that I could make a meaningful contribution to my field. The dashing of those hopes is the substance of my trilogy of novels.

If you are to secure a career as an academic, you have to write and publish a great deal after you finish your studies. You have to learn to write in an appropriate way, and to tailor your essays for journals and book publishers. If you want to succeed, it is best to identify with a certain position, or a school of thinkers, or perhaps one particular thinker. Would-be philosophy lecturers strap on the exoskeleton of one great thinker or another, and stride about the philosophical landscape. You make a name for yourself as a Kantian, say, or a Husserlian, as something -ian, at any rate, forgetting for the moment that you've only really borrowed your strength. The time of reckoning comes once you've got a permanent job, and lose your alibi of having to publish. You have to begin all over again, more humbly this time, working more slowly and depending on your own strength. The danger is that you end up like those Žižek calls "poor idiot professors," writing on this and then that ... At the end of your struggle for an academic job, it's a mediocrity that you see in the mirror.

In my case, my time of reckoning led me in a different direction. Blogging allowed me to write of my sense of failure. Perhaps if I hadn't spent so much time at my blog writing about my failure, I wouldn't have been a failure! On the other hand, writing about my failure became a certain kind of success ...

Do you feel like the world owes you a chance to make a living as a writer?

Absolutely not! No—in the strongest possible sense. I cannot stand any self-importance associated with the ‘creative arts’, or any sense that anything is owed to you because of them. The writer as entertainer: that’s my model. The writer as buffoon, with his cap and bells ...

What is the strongest emotional reaction you have ever elicited from a reader, either in your written work or during a reading? What is the strongest emotional reaction you have ever elicited from yourself during the writing process?

Rereading my first attempts at academic prose horrified me. Nick Land writes:

Academic prose has the remarkable capacity to plunge one into a sublime dystopian nightmare: is anything this appalling really possible? One asks. What happened to these people? Is it part of some elaborate joke perhaps? Or do they just hate books? There is a sense in which one can only admire their ability to make Nietzsche seem like a bank manager, Bataille like an occupational therapist, or Derrida world-historic, but in the end one vomits. Such writing is unparalleled as an introduction to despair[...] (With trembling fingers one turns the pages: we have really come to this). One only has to read genuine scholarship to be wracked by ardent dreams of incinerated cities.

Land’s point counts all the more when it comes to would-be academic prose. I felt the horror of which Land writes at my own would-be scholarly writings. The ‘would-be’ is important here, because back then I lacked even the minimal ability to write, to form a sentence. How grotesque! Horror at my own prose: that was the strongest emotional reaction that my work ever elicited from me ... Horror at my scholarly imposture ...

But there was more than that. Because I wasn’t content to be a scholar. I wanted my work to be relevant somehow, to address the present somehow. I wanted to make it “political” in the vacuous academic sense of that word, where the political is everywhere and therefore nowhere. ‘Political’ in that safely academic sense, writing of hope without doing anything to bring about the conditions of hope. So I experienced a second, deeper horror: the horror of political imposture.

In the early days at the blog, I wrote a series of posts in which I reversed some of the formulations from Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*, his “Behold the Man.” Nietzsche’s text has chapters with titles like “Why I am a Genius,” “Why my work is world-historical,” “Why I am a Destiny.” I wrote comically self-lacerating posts with titles like “Why I am not a Genius,” “Why I am not a Destiny.” The response I got to these posts was gratifying: people recognised themselves in my self-portrait, in the “Behold the Idiot” of my blog posts.

When are you at your most truthful as a writer?

I think I became more truthful when I marked the distance I felt with respect to the European writers who interested me—the distance between my world and the world they inhabited. When I wrote about the British context in which I was reading—a context in which the writers important to me had made no impact, and were regarded as drivel if they were known at all; a context in which mass culture had long since displaced the forms of high culture on which my writers depended; a context that had been drained of meaning by neoliberal capitalism. I was surprised to find myself turning into a *comic* writer. I put on my jester’s cap.

Self-knowledge is important—wise people have always agreed on that, placing a value on introspection, on exploring the inner self. But such self-knowledge cannot be complete unless it understands the way in which the inner self is *constituted*. My novels to date have been what are called ‘autofictions’—they are fictionalised, absurdly exaggerated self-portraits. But my task was to lay bare the *constitution* of my characters—the way they were formed by the culture in which they lived, as well as the larger forces of capitalism. That was my aim, above all, in *Exodus*, which I hope is the most truthful of my books.

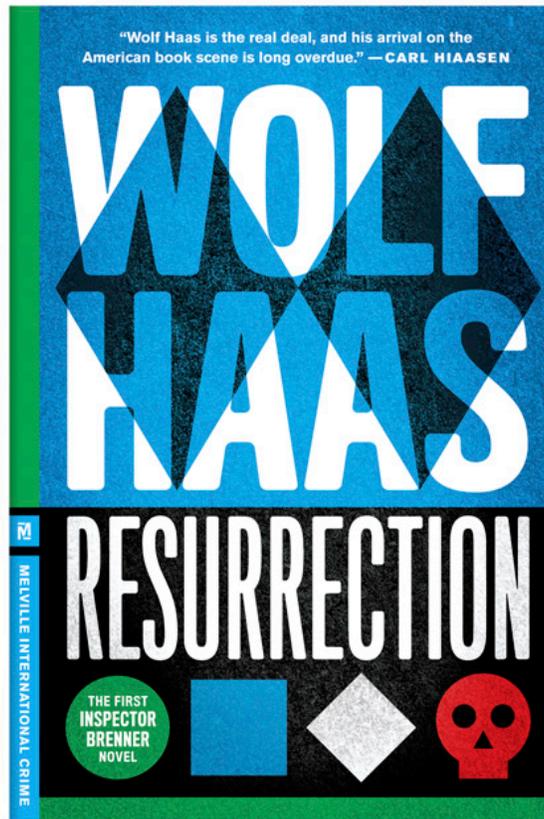
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International Crime



Resurrection

Wolf Haas

Translated by Annie Janusch

Paperback

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January 28, 2014

When an American couple is found frozen to death on a ski lift in a pristine Alpine village, Brenner is called in to investigate, in his first case as a private investigator. This is the first book in Wolf Haas's bestselling quirky crime series and the third published by Melville House. Carl Hiaasen has said that "Wolf Haas is the real deal, and his arrival on the American book scene is long overdue."

"When I work on a Wolf Haas novel, I think of the great monologues and monologists in Tarantino or Coen brothers movies, characters who stop the narrative in its tracks to give their inimitable voices appropriate time to unfold—Christopher Walken in True Romance, Christoph Waltz in Django Unchained. They end up, of course, being the most memorable parts of the movie. Like these directors and actors (and Haas inspires similar cultish fandom in his German readers), I always feel like Haas has, in equal measure, a love for the conventions of crime novels and a willingness to mess with them in ways that produce entirely singular results." —Sal Robinson, editor

Excerpt from CHAPTER ONE:

As far as America goes, Zell's a tiny speck. Middle of Europe somewhere. As far as Pinzgau's concerned, though, Zell's the capital of Pinzgau. Ten thousand inhabitants, thirty mountains over 3,000 meters high, fifty-eight ski lifts, one lake. And believe it or not. Last December, two Americans were killed in Zell. But for now, get a load of this.

After the war, it was the skiing that brought prosperity to Zell. Suddenly, snowfall meant money on the ground. But it goes without saying: you can't be too lazy to bend down and pick it up.

Take the lift operators, for instance. All day long they've got to watch out that nobody falls out of the lift. Day in, day out, thousands of skiers swooshing right past them. Nobody ever falls out of the lift usually, but if it should happen, not the end of the world, either. Lift operator's just got to go over to the emergency brake and turn the lift off. And no easy job. Looks easy, but it's not as easy as it looks. On account of the cold. Doesn't matter how good a thermal suit St. Nick brings you. Won't do you any good in the long run. That's why, throughout the land, you can recognize lift operators by their frostbit red noses. Enough to make you think, Those aren't lift operators at all, but secret clowns, making fun of the whole charade that's got them chasing all over the place in every kind of weather.

One lift operator, though, the people tell stories about him, Alois the Lift Operator, or Alois the Lift for short, how he used to sometimes let the local kids through for free. Well, on the morning of December twenty-second, after the longest night of the year, there was something else altogether that had him cursing. Not the crap-ass weather, even though the weather was crap-ass awful.

He rode in like he always did with Wörgötter in his snowcat to the Panorama Lift station in the valley. Wörgötter let him off, and he hopped out into the dawn and went straight to the lift cabin, and, like he did every morning, turned the radiator on first and then the radio.

And just like every morning, one of them little punks from the night before had left it dialed to Ö3, and of course, all Alois the Lift had to say about that was: "Ghetto music." So, there he is, turning the dial like he does every morning, nice and slowly to the left, because it was an old radio. A person who can turn a dial slower than Alois, well, not easy to find. You'd have thought he was defusing a bomb. And, on top of it all, Alois the Lift's got his little finger jutting out like some withered twig. On account of him cutting it with a circular saw when he was a kid.

So, he finally gets his station in. Where it's always the old times all the time. And good music. Half an hour ago, Alois the Lift, sound asleep still. Now, he's happy just to be listening along over a Thermos of coffee to these old stories.

Take the snow, for instance. Time and again they dig up that story about how twenty or even just a few years ago, there used to be way more snow. Well, needless to say, Alois the Lift knows best: not a word of it true.

It was just the liftees and the innkeepers that started the rumor because, ordinarily, it was only every other or every third winter that there was snow during the Christmas holidays. And needless to say, the skiers, not exactly satisfied—saving up their money all year long up north in the Ruhr Valley just to sit around their hotel rooms.

Or else just to go swooshing over slopes that've only got a light dusting on them and ruining their new gear on their first day out. The gastronomes sure liked dishing up that story about the climate change. Because that's how people are—they cope much easier with some great calamity like the destruction of the earth than they do a minor misfortune like the destruction of their new skis.

And these days when you're a tourist someplace, you're just happy if a local talks to you. That's why every waiter and gas station attendant has got away with dishing up this story since, well, always, to the German and Dutch tourists, about how everything, but especially the snow, used to be way better. And they're just biding their time till January, because it'll definitely snow in January, so much that you won't even be able to ski on account of the avalanches.

But, this December, everything was different. There was so much snow that Alois the Lift could barely see out of the operator's cabin where he'd just took a sip of Thermos-coffee. On the radio somebody was talking about the last time there was this much snow. Believe it or not: before the war.

As Alois the Lift walks out of the cabin—because he’s got to get the chairlift going on the daily test run—he can still see Wörgötter’s snowcat, barely making a dent in the snow. “White gold,” they’d be saying in Zell. But Alois the Lift couldn’t hear anything just then besides the noise from the snowcat and the chairlift starting up. He was two lifts away from the village—he couldn’t even see the village, because he couldn’t even see twenty meters in front of him in this heavy snowfall.

Alois the Lift couldn’t see the snowcat anymore now, either, but then Wörgötter switched all eight of its lights on, and needless to say. All at once, all the slopes lit up, bright as day on this dark, dark morning after the longest night of the year.

The parcel that was slowly approaching on one of the lift seats, though. Alois the Lift couldn’t fully make it out yet. Naturally he wondered how there could even be something on the seat. Every evening the lift goes on a quality control run so that nothing gets left behind on a seat. It was the oldest chairlift in Zell, still a one-seater—didn’t even have a double. But, for as long as Alois the Lift could remember—and he’d been working the lift the secondlongest of anybody—there’d never been anything left on a seat in the morning.

“Those idiots!” Alois the Lift muttered, and he was getting cold in the gusts of snow now, because every year, the parkas got better, but the wind just stang all the more.

“Those idiots didn’t do a control run yesterday!”

Those idiots would be the same young liftees who were always switching the radio over to the “ghetto music.” And as the massive parcel got closer, Alois the Lift’s thoughts just turned darker and darker.

He had very good eyes, because he always protected them with those Carrera sunglasses that St. Nick had brought him some years ago. But the bundle was covered in such a thick coat of snow that he still couldn’t make out with any certainty what it was. Even though it was only a few seats away from the station. Or at least that’s how he told it, Alois the Lift, that night at the Rainerwirt.

“That’s when I could tell that it wasn’t just some empty case of beer from New Zealand, the ski disco, like I thought at first. But then,” as Alois the Lift told it at the Rainerwirt on the twenty-second—and then, on the twenty-third, in nearly the same words, all over again at the Hirschen:

“But that’s when I realized.”

Forty years Alois the Lift had been stationed on the lift, and countless serious accidents had happened on the slopes in that time. Often enough Martin the helicopter had to come—twice somebody fell out of the chair. There’d actually been so many deaths that, over the years, they all ran together in Alois’s mind.

Not to mention New Zealand’s victims, who got crushed beneath the snowcat in the dark. See, the drunks fall down in the snow and then are too tired to get back up. And when you’re drunk, the snow seems so warm to you. So they just lie there in the warm snow and get a little shut-eye. Next morning, all you can do is send the corpses back to Germany.

But a dead body in a lift seat on the morning line-check, well, Alois the Lift had never had that happen before.

“What in god’s name!” Alois the Lift yelled out.

Now, you should know. For years, Alois had acted in his community theater troupe. The community theater troupe was founded in the mid-sixties by the tourism bureau. It goes without saying, though, billed to the tourists as some relic out of the Stone Age. This winter they put on *The Truth* about Moser Gudrun. A play in three acts, it said on the posters, by Silvia Soll. And among the actors listed on the posters, Alois the Lift came in third: “Alois Mitteregger (Alois the Lift).”

Alois the Lift was a real darling among community theater-goers. But when he described the incident from the valley station at the Rainerwirt that night, well, community theater doesn’t come close.

“What in god’s name, I cried out,” he cried out—and so loud that everybody in the whole bar could understand. “I switched that lift off as fast it’d go to Off. Even though it was obvious that there was nothing left to do. But when you’re scared, you do it as fast as you can. Even if there’s no point. Because, if, first thing in the morning, somebody’s sitting on the lift, then he’s been sitting there all night. Since we don’t run it in between,” Alois the Lift says.

“It gave me a scare, of course, so I brought the lift to a halt a.s.a.p. We’ve had first aid, you know, mouth-to-mouth. But you’ll be doing mouth-to-mouth a long time with fifteen centimeters of snow between you and the body. Even though it’d just started snowing that morning. Been a clear starry sky that night. I took the dog out after the eight o’clock movie, and it was clear. And when it’s starry like that here, end of December, it’s at least seven degrees in the dead of night,” Alois the Lift says.

“Seven below,” Alois the Lift says, and looks at his listeners just long enough for them to get a little nervous. Just one of the pauses that they’re always rehearsing at the community theater. And before anyone could interrupt him like a bad theater prompter, Alois the Lift says:

“I’m in shock. I’m running so fast to the emergency brake that it nearly does me in. Even though I could tell right away it’s no use. But I’m running and I’m slipping on the fresh fallen snow. Underneath it’s a plate of ice—don’t budge all winter long. That’s where the load line snakes around, and up you go, easy, since they’re always polishing it with those sharp edges of theirs, all year long, pure formica. Now, I know this—I know every one of the ice sheets around the lift, and I haven’t gone down in years. Ha! They’re always falling all over the place there, the Dutch girls, because you don’t see the crust under the dust. But I do, of course, I know it. But now, I’m so scared that I’ve forgot.

Could’ve turned out not too pretty, but I just barely catch hold of the emergency brake—and caught myself, too, right on the red emergency brake. That’s when it stopped, the lift,” Alois the Lift says.

“And I was still standing, too. I walk back to the chair where the body is, a little shaky in the knees from the shock—nearly took me down. But before I could get to knocking the snow off the corpse, the phone in the cabin starts ringing. Now I don’t know: should I knock the snow off the corpse or should I go in and get the phone. But the phone don’t stop, and because it’s too late anyway, I hurry up and go in.”

Maybe the lift operator was exaggerating a little with the pauses, because he raised his beer at this point and took an abnormally long sip.

“Meanwhile, Wörgötter’s made it to my lift terminal up top. An old fox, too, that one,” Alois the Lift says, smiling.

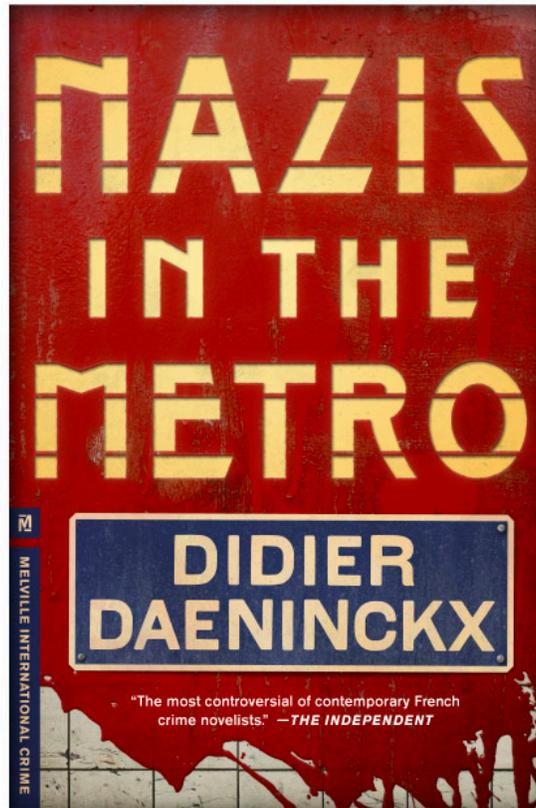
“But now he’s yelling, all excited and beside himself, saying that a body’s just come in on the chairlift up there. And right at that moment, when it’s at the very tiptop, that’s when the lift comes to a halt.”

Resurrection by Wolf Haas will be available on January 28, 2014.

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For more information, visit mhpbooks.com.



Nazis in the Metro
Didier Daeninckx
Translated by Anna Moschovakis
Paperback
9781612192963 | \$14.95 U.S./Can.
March 25, 2014

Nazis in the Metro is a cult detective novel of anarcho-Communist-Fascist intrigue in late-twentieth-century Paris, first published in French in 1996. It is Melville House's third book by Didier Daeninckx, after *A Very Profitable War* and *Murder in Memoriam*. Daeninckx's books appeal to both literary and genre readers, thanks to their grounding in actual political events and milieus.

"Didier Daeninckx is a born troublemaker. Famed as a public intellectual / rabble rouser in his native France, his crime book Murder in Memoriam, which was based on a real historic incident, actually prompted such a public outcry that it led to a re-investigation of the case in question ... and the conviction of a senior government official. Now, in Nazis in the Metro—a title that tweaks the nose of another beloved French writer, Raymond Queneau, author of Zazi on the Metro—Daeninckx tries to stir up trouble again with another story based on a real character: in this case, it's a famous writer written off because he seems to no longer be so important ... until someone tries to murder him. It turns out to be a stirring story of a fearless man who persists despite the odds, written in Daeninckx's inimitable fast-moving style." — Dennis Johnson, editor and publisher

Q&A with Didier Daeninckx:

What inspired you to write Nazis in the Metro?

I wrote this book in 1995, just after the Yugoslav Wars that killed more than 250,000 people in Europe. A very strange phenomenon was taking place then: French intellectuals from the extreme left were defending ultranationalist killers. People like the French-Russian writer Edouard Limonov enlisted in the Serbian army, and then came to the fashionable bars of Saint-Germain in Paris boasting of their triumphs. It was that climate, that shift in the elite classes, that I wanted to describe.

Nazis in the Metro tells the story of a writer called André Sloga. Was he modeled on anyone?

Yes, I modeled him on a writer friend of mine by the name of Jean Meckert (1910–1995), who published numerous crime novels under the pseudonym Jean Amila. He was violently attacked in the 1970s and lost his memory as a result. He later carried out investigations into his own life, in order to recover the memories he had lost.

What drives your detective, Gabriel Lecouvreur?

He has a major flaw for the times we live in: he is devoid of indifference, he's affected by the suffering of others. If he were a philosopher, he would define himself as an "Unhappy Consciousness." Which doesn't stop him from wanting to put everything to rights!

Why do you so often take real historical and political events as the basis of your novels?

I think history invited itself into my cradle: I had one pacifist grandfather who was a deserter in the First World War; one Communist grandfather who was the mayor of a town near Paris in 1935 and who resigned in protest of the Hitler-Stalin pact; a mother who used to travel secretly into Franco's Spain to work with those plotting to overthrow the dictator; a bedroom that served as a hiding place for Vietcong emissaries during the secret negotiations that took place in Paris in the middle of the Vietnam War . . . I had no choice but to investigate all of that, this family history of fighting injustice, of solidarity with people from far away.

You're known as one of France's most outspoken writers. Have you ever experienced an attack like that on Sloga in Nazis in the Metro?

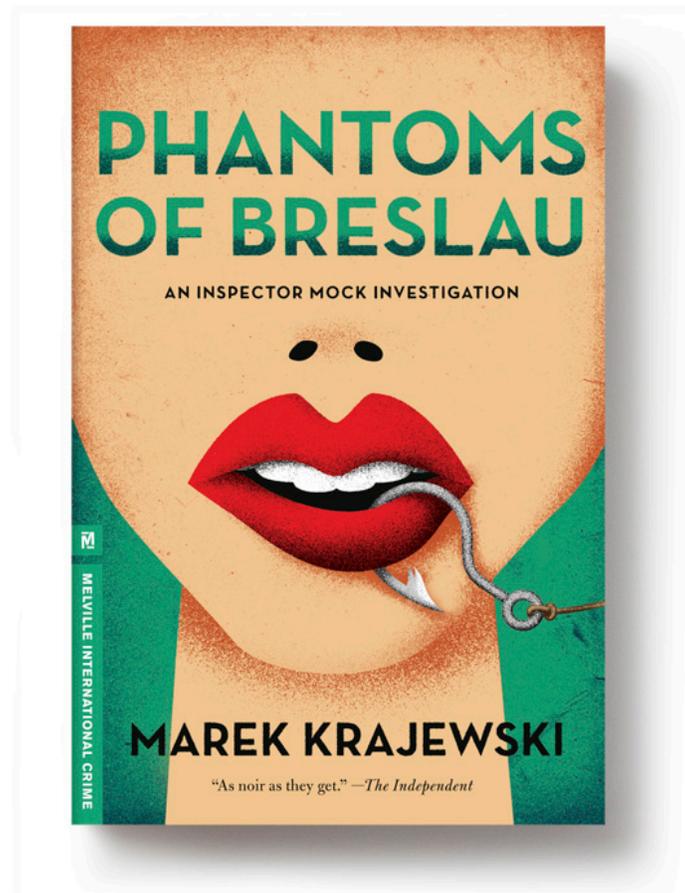
A few years ago, an extreme-right group, Unité Radicale, tried to kill President Jacques Chirac on the Champs-Élysées in Paris during a military parade. The police found a file on me in this group's records—my address, telephone number, a write-up of my movements . . . Later, someone emptied many liters of gas on my front door and set it alight. Fortunately, my neighbors alerted me, and my wife and I were able to escape. Periods of crisis don't tend to calm such passions . . .

Nazis in the Metro by Didier Daeninckx will be available on March 25, 2014.

Paperback
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9781612192970

For more information, visit mhpbooks.com.



Phantoms of Breslau

An Inspector Mock Investigation

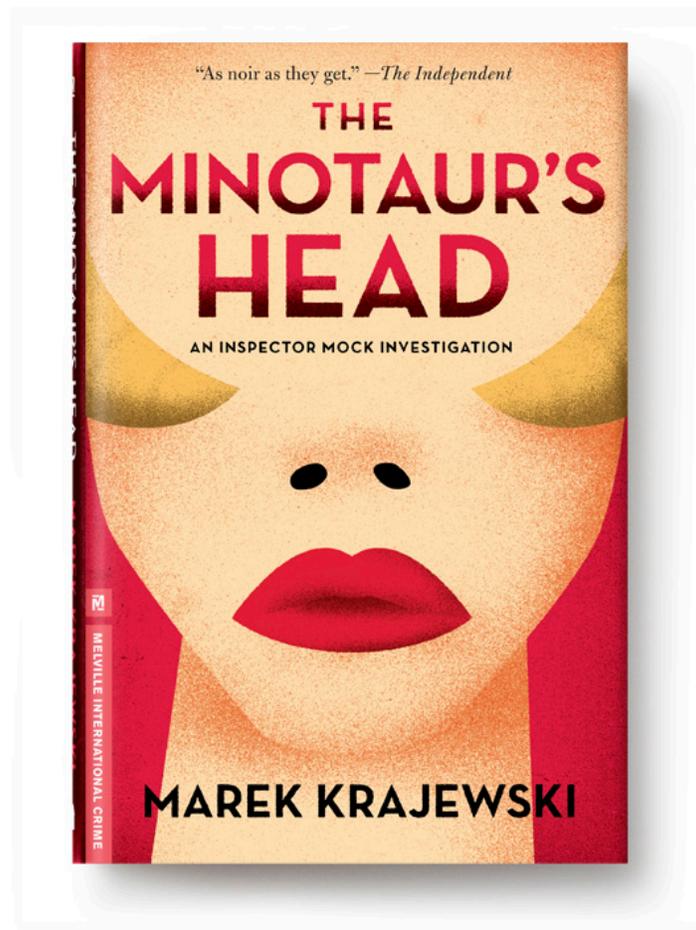
Marek Krajewski

Translated by Danusia Stok

Hardcover

9781612192727 | \$25.95 U.S./Can.

January 7, 2014



The Minotaur's Head
An Inspector Mock Investigation
Marek Krajewski
Translated by Danusia Stok
Hardcover
9781612193427 | \$25.95 U.S./Can.
August 26, 2014

The Phantoms of Breslau and *The Minotaur's Head* are the latest books in Inspector Eberhard Mock series that has earned starred reviews from *Booklist* and *Publishers Weekly* and includes *Death in Breslau* and *The End of the World in Breslau*. Set in Nazi-occupied Breslau; the city is in the grip of the Gestapo, and has become a place where spies are everywhere, corrupt ministers torture confessions from Jewish merchants, and Freemasons guard their secrets with blackmail and violence.

"Marek Krajewski has written a marvelous series of detective novels set in the German city of Breslau, what's now the Polish city of Wrocław. At the end of World War II, Breslau was made into a modern Polish capital almost overnight, but in Krajewski's hit series, it is a corrupt and decadent city—where Old World mystery and ancient history color an already dark historical period. Krajewski's detective, Inspector Eberhard Mock, solves cases by working the brothels and drinking dens of Breslau. As the Independent has written, the series is as 'noir as it gets,' with Mock vying with petty municipal officials, Nazi bureaucrats, and even the Masons to solve brutal murders. The series, which has already reached bestseller status in Poland, Germany, and the UK, need not be read in order: each volume stands alone in

chronicling the dark history of Breslau and gives capitulating glimpses of Inspector Mock, one of the most addictive characters in crime fiction.” —Kelly Burdick, editor and associate publisher

Excerpt from *The End of the World in Breslau*:

BRESLAU, NOVEMBER 28TH, 1927
ELEVEN O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING

Gelfrert had occupied a small room in the garret of a sumptuous tenement at Friedrich-Wilhelm-Strasse 21. Apart from a stool, a basin, a mirror, a clothes stand and an iron bed, the room contained only empty bottles of Guttentag alpine herb liqueur, neatly arranged beneath the window. On the sill stood a few books and a case containing a French horn.

“He had a delicate palate,” Ehlers remarked, spreading his tripod.

Mock gave his men the appropriate instructions, went downstairs, crossed the street and made his way towards Königsplatz. It had stopped raining and the sun had come out, accentuating the bright sign of Grengel’s Inn. A moment later, Mock was devouring a much-needed pork-lard roll, washing down the hot taste of paprika with a beer. He drank the last drops with relief and experienced a faint dizziness. He tossed some small change to the sympathetic bulldog who was drying tankards behind the bar, and shut himself in the telephone booth. It took him a while to remember his own number. Adalbert picked up after the first ring.

“Good day, is the mistress at home?” Mock enounced the syllables slowly.

“Unfortunately, Counsellor, Mrs Sophie left an hour ago,” Adalbert spoke quickly; he knew his master would want to be told everything without having to ask. “She went shopping with Miss Pflüger shortly after some roses were delivered to her. She took the basket with her.”

Mock hung up the receiver and left the bar. His men were back in the Adler, filling the car with cigarette smoke. He joined them.

“Gelfrert had a fiancée once, a large blonde of about thirty. She used to visit him with a two-year-old boy,” Smolorz recounted his questioning of the caretaker. “An unmarried woman with a child. The caretaker hasn’t seen her for quite some time. Gelfrert worked in some orchestra and visited pupils. Gave piano lessons. He had been in a bad way recently. He drank. Nobody visited him. Neighbours complained he left shit in the crapper after he used it. Nothing more from the caretaker.”

“We found a request form from the Municipal Library.” Ehlers held a piece of printed paper under Mock’s nose. “September 10th, Gelfrert returned a book entitled *Antiquitates Silesiaca*. The library gave him a receipt confirming the book’s return.”

“So he was still alive on September 10th. Taking Doctor Lasarius’ reckonings into account, our musician was walled in at the shoemaker’s workshop in the Griffins yard between 10th and 30th September.”

“Someone lured him there, or dragged him when he was unconscious,” Smolorz opened the window to let in a breath of air.

“Then he was gagged and tied to the hook on the far wall of the recess, so that he wouldn’t thrash around and knock down the newly erected wall,” added Mock. “One thing interests me: wasn’t our Bluebeard afraid that the following day a new tenant might move in and discover a wall had just been built or, worse still, hear inarticulate sounds uttered by the victim, despite the gag?”

The men did not say anything. Mock thought about another tankard of beer, then spread himself out on the passenger seat and turned to the policemen in the back. His hat, tipped back to the crown of his head, gave him a rakish appearance.

“Smolorz, you’re to drag that drunken caretaker of the Griffins from his underground lair and question him. Then check for the deceased in our files, as well as all the acquaintances in his notebook. You, Ehlers, are to research Gelfrert’s past. Where he was born, his religion and so on. Then question those acquaintances of his who live in Breslau. I want a report the day after tomorrow at noon sharp.”

“And what am I to do?” Meinerer asked. Mock thought for a moment. Meinerer was ambitious and vindictive. Once, he had confided to Ehlers over a schnapps that he did not understand why Mock favoured

a dunderhead like Smolorz. Meinerer had not realized that to criticize good-natured Smolorz was an offence difficult to wipe out in Mock's eyes. From that moment onwards, Meinerer had encountered numerous obstacles on his career path.

"You, Meinerer, I want to assign you an entirely different task. I suspect my nephew has fallen in with some bad company. You're to follow him for two weeks, every day. Erwin Mock, nineteen years old, lives at Nicolaistrasse 20, attends Matthiasgymnasium." Pretending not to see the disappointment on Meinerer's face, Mock climbed out of the car. "I'll go on foot – there's something important I have to do."

He strode briskly in the direction of Grengel's Inn.

"Counsellor sir, Counsellor, please wait," he heard Meinerer's voice behind him. He turned to wait for his subordinate with an indifferent expression.

"That assistant of yours, Smolorz, he's a bit taciturn," Meinerer was triumphant. "He didn't tell you there was a universal calendar hanging on the wall, the kind you tear the pages out of. Do you know which page had been torn out last?"

"12th September?" Meinerer nodded as Mock looked at him with approval. "The one the murderer attached to the victim's waistcoat with a pin? Do you have the calendar with you?"

"Here it is." Meinerer brightened and handed Mock yet another brown envelope.

"Good work," Mock said, and slipped it into his coat pocket. "I'll take care of it; I'll check whether the page on the waistcoat comes from this very calendar."

Then he looked at his silent subordinate with amusement and quite unexpectedly patted him on the shoulder.

"Go and follow Erwin, Meinerer. My nephew is more important to me than all the walled- and unwalled-in corpses in this city."

Excerpt from a Q&A with Marek Krajewski on the [Crime Scraps blog](#):

I really enjoyed Death in Breslau [the first book in the series]. Is there a tradition of crime writing in Poland?

I am extremely pleased that you liked my novel. I am bursting with pride that in Great Britain—the homeland of Conan Doyle and Christie—my debut novel was so well received.

In Poland between the wars there was a very faint tradition of crime writing, then, during the Communist period authors were writing under pseudonyms [most often English, eg. Joe Alex=Maciej Slomczynski, a popular translator of Shakespeare] or created ideologically loaded police novels.

The situation changed after 1989, now we have many Polish crime writers, including me.

Do you read much crime fiction from the English speaking world and has anyone inspired you?

Fiction from the English speaking world is the real empire of crime novels and thrillers, although Scandinavia slowly becomes a criminal superpower too. I read of course, and have read many authors writing in English. I was especially impressed with two, who were my true literary inspiration: Frederick Forsyth and Raymond Chandler. These are true masters!

I also like novels by Elisabeth George. Recently I have taken real delight in reading Val McDermid.

What crime fiction novel would you like to have written?

If I understand correctly, you ask whether I envy any author their novels? It is not so much a question of envy, but rather of literary mastery I would like to achieve. I hope that one day I will write a novel as good and thrilling as *The Long Goodbye* by Raymond Chandler.

Eberhard Mock is a detective for his time and place; did you base his character on a real life person or is he drawn purely from your imagination?

It is an entirely fictional character although his name is authentic. I found it in a prewar address book and really liked it, because it creates interesting stress patterns.

Phantoms of Breslau by Marek Krajewski will be available on January 7, 2014, in hardcover and June 17, 2014, in paperback.

Hardcover
9781612192727

Paperback
9781612193441

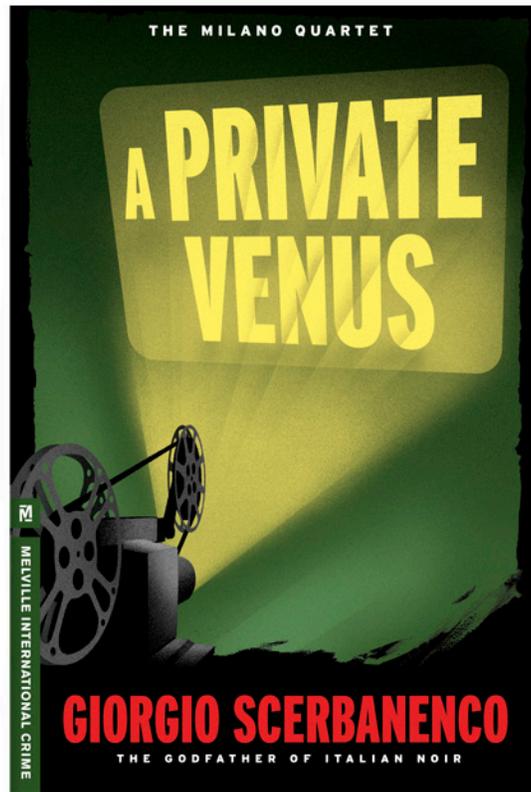
Ebook
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The Minotaur's Head by Marek Krajewski will be available on August 26, 2014.

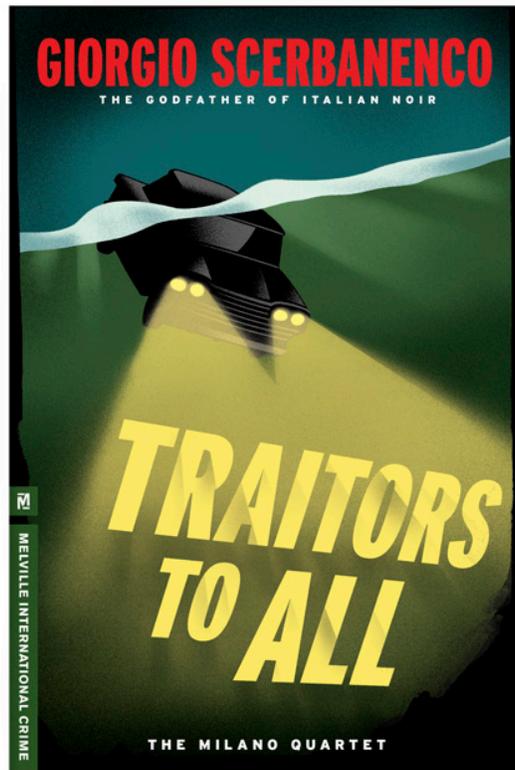
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A Private Venus
Giorgio Scerbanenco
A Duca Lamberti Noir
Translated by Howard Curtis
Paperback
9781612193359 | \$16.95 U.S./Can.
March 25, 2014



Traitors to All

Giorgio Scerbanenco

A Duca Lamberti Noir

Translated by Howard Curtis

Paperback

9781612193663 | \$16.95 U.S./Can.

June 3, 2014

Two classic Italian noir novels from one of the greatest Italian crime writers, translated for the first time into English. Giorgio Scerbanenco is considered by many to be the father of Italian noir and has been called the Italian Simenon. He worked as a journalist and as a contributor to women's magazines before turning to crime fiction. The most prestigious Italian literary prize for crime fiction is named after him.

In *A Private Venus*, Duca Lamberti, a doctor in 1960s Milan whose license has been revoked, investigates the mysterious death of a young woman and discovers a grim, disturbing underworld in the land of *la dolce vita*. The second book, *Traitors to All*, is also set in 1960s Milan and is the story of a murder with its roots in the final days of World War II. Buried secrets about collaboration and double-dealing come to light, and Lamberti dives into the violent underworld of the apparently placid, prosperous city.

"Giorgio Scerbanenco wrote only four crime books, and then died right after finishing the fourth, and the flood of Italian noir since then has obscured him. But we noticed that a lot of those more recent writers cited Scerbanenco, so we decided to take a look at his work, and we were stunned. His detective, Duca Lamberti, is a marvelous invention—a medical doctor who lost his license for helping a terminally ill patient

commit suicide. He's a kind of classic, not-so-jaded-as-he-pretends tough guy but with an intellectual streak. And the setting—Milan in the sixties—is a wonderful evocation of a time and place: sleek cars, stylish clothes, and killer shoes. Throw in the fact that the stories have real heart—they're not just meaningless whodunits—and you've got the best noir you've never heard of ... till now.” —Dennis Johnson, editor and publisher

Excerpt from PART ONE of *A Private Venus*:

PART ONE

Isn't telling the story of a man's life something like a prayer?

1

After three years in prison he had learned to pass the time with whatever was at hand, but for the first ten minutes he smoked a cigarette without thinking of any game to play. It was only when he threw the cigarette end down on the gravel drive that it struck him: the number of little stones in the various drives and garden paths was a finite number. Even the number of grains of sand in all the beaches in the world was a finite number that could be calculated, however large it was, and so, staring down at the ground, he started to count. In five square centimetres there might be an average of eighty stones, so he calculated visually the area of all the drives and paths that led to the villa ahead of him and concluded that all the gravel in all the drives, which seemed infinite, consisted of a mere one million six hundred thousand stones, with a ten per cent margin of error.

Then, suddenly, there was a crunching sound on the gravel, and he lifted his head for a moment: a man had emerged from the villa and was coming along the biggest drive towards him. Now that the man had appeared he had time to play a game, so, sitting on that small concrete shelf that functioned as a bench, he leaned forward and picked up a handful of stones. The game consisted of guessing two things: one, if the number of stones was an odd or even number, and two, if that number was higher or lower than a chosen number: twenty, for example. To win you had to guess both things. He estimated that he had an even number of stones in his fist, and a number lower than twenty. He opened his fist and counted: he had won, there were eighteen stones.

'I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting, Dr Lamberti.' The man had come level with him, and his voice was solemn and tired, the voice of a weary emperor. Leaning forward like that, Duca saw only the man's legs, thin legs inside narrow trousers: a young man's trousers, although the man wasn't young, as he saw as soon as he got up to shake the hand he was holding out. He was a middle-aged man, little but powerful, his hair shaved to almost nothing, his beard shaved down to the root, his hand also little but with a grip of steel.

'Good evening,' he said to the little emperor. 'Pleased to meet you.' In prison he had learned not to say more than he needed to. At his trial, while Signora Maldrigati's niece was crying over her murdered aunt, but omitting to mention the millions she had inherited from that same aunt, he had wanted to speak, but his defence lawyer, almost with tears in his eyes, had whispered in his ear that he shouldn't say a word, not one: he would tell the truth, and the truth is death, anything but the truth in a courtroom, at a trial. Or in life.

'It's very hot in Milan,' the little man said, and sat down next to him on the concrete bench. 'Here in the Brianza, on the other hand, it's always cool. Do you know the Brianza?'

He couldn't have called him here to talk about the weather in the Brianza, he was just easing himself into it. 'Yes,' he replied, 'as a boy I used to come here by bicycle, Canzo, Asso, the lake.'

'By bicycle,' the little man said. 'I used to come here by bicycle, too, when I was young.'

The conversation seemed to be over. In the dusk, the garden was almost dark, some lights went on in the villa, a bus passed on the main road twenty metres below the villa, its horn sounding almost like a piece by Wagner.

'It's gone out of fashion these days,' the little man resumed, 'they all chase the sun on the French Riviera or the islands, whereas here in the Brianza, only half an hour's drive from Milan, the air's as clear as if you were in Tahiti. I think it's because people always want to go a long way from where they are. A place is never beautiful if it's too close. My son regards this villa as a kind of punishment cell, whenever I tell him to come here he does it as a penance. Maybe he's right: it may be cooler, but it's a bit boring.' It was almost dark now, the lighted windows in the villa were the only light. In a different voice, the little man said, 'Were you told why I wanted to see you, Dr Lamberti?'

No, Duca said, he hadn't been told. What he had been told, though, was who this man who seemed so modest, so simple, really was: one of the magnificent five, in other words one of the top five engineers in the field of plastics, Engineer Pietro Auseri, late fifties, a man who could create anything out of anything, a special kind of plastic was named after him, Auserolo, he had three degrees, his fortune must be considerable, but officially he was only a freelance engineer with an old office in an old street in Milan.

'I thought they would have told you,' the little man said. The tiredness had gone from his voice, only the authority remained, he had clearly said all he had to say on the topics of the weather and tourism.

'All I was told was that you might have a job for me,' Duca said. It was dark now, more lights came on in the villa, a dim trail of light reached as far as the spot where they were.

'Yes, in a way it's a job,' Auseri said. 'Do you mind if we talk here? My son's in the house and I don't want you to see him until after we've talked.'

'That's fine by me.' He liked this little middle-aged man: he was no fool. Over the past few years, inside prison and out, Duca had seen whole armies of fools and he could almost tell them from the smell, from a finger, from a single hair in their eyebrows.

'You're a doctor,' Auseri said.

He didn't reply immediately, but a few moments later, and in that darkness, in that silence, it was a long pause. 'I was. I'm sure you were told.'

'Certainly,' Auseri said, 'but you're still a doctor. And I need a doctor.'

Duca counted the windows in the villa: there were eight of them, four on the ground floor and four on the first floor. 'I can't practice anymore. I can't even give injections – especially not injections. Weren't you told?'

'I was told everything, but it doesn't matter.'

Curious. 'If you need a doctor,' Duca said, 'and choose one who's been struck off the register and can't even prescribe an aspirin, then it must matter a bit.'

'No,' the emperor said, politely but authoritatively. In the darkness he held out the packet of cigarettes. 'Do you smoke?'

'I even spent three years in prison.' He took a cigarette and Auseri lit it for him. 'For murder.'

'I know,' Auseri said, 'but it doesn't matter.'

Then maybe nothing really mattered.

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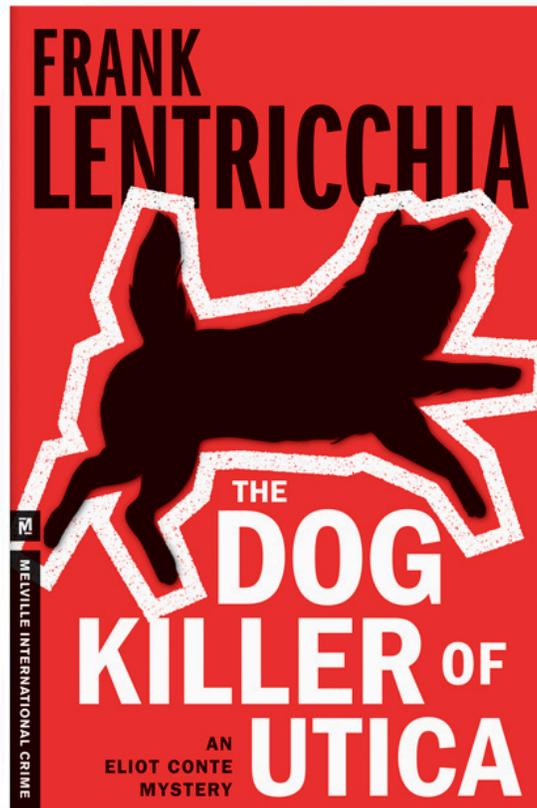
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The Dog Killer of Utica
An Eliot Conte Mystery
Frank Lentricchia
Paperback
9781612193373 | \$15.95 U.S./Can.
April 22, 2014

This is the second book following *The Accidental Pallbearer* in a gritty crime series featuring ex-literature professor Eliot Conte.

“Frank’s sharp ear for dialogue is second to none: The Dog Killer has all the wise guy patter and pacing of the best mob movies, so much so that while I was editing it I often found myself reading it out loud (and yes, occasionally with a bad Tony Soprano accent). And his main character, Eliot Conte, is as flawed and compelling as the classic detectives of crime fiction, though he’s uniquely rooted in Utica, New York, a city with a surprisingly notorious past.” —Sal Robinson, editor

Excerpt from CHAPTER 2:

Eliot pulls up to 1318 Mary to find Catherine Cruz standing on the front porch, shivering in a lightweight sweater, smoking, who had quit in solidarity a year ago on the day she’d accompanied him to an open meeting where he qualified: “I’m Eliot. I’m an alcoholic.” He approaches carrying his Johnnie Walker in the brown bag with Barbone’s Booze emblazed on it in red. She flips the cigarette into the gathering snowstorm. They go in. Without a word. He’s convinced: Bobby is dead. She’d received a call from an ex-colleague in Troy with connections to the spokesman at Saint Jude. Then she’d bought a pack, and who

would blame her, and now he'll join her in resumed addiction and drink with impunity because Bobby was dead. She leads him into the kitchen where the table is set and the aroma from a pizza box from Napoli's fills the room.

She, pointing to the bag, "That's the store on Mohawk and South, northeast corner. Correct?"

Bobby's gone—she's avoiding breaking the news: "What's the difference where I bought it?"

"My partner and I stop in there once in a while to warn Freddy not to sell to minors. Don Belmonte, you know Don, he says he's almost willing to pay to have Freddy burned down. Don was close to your father, he tells me."

(They back away from each other to opposite ends of the kitchen.)

"Catherine."

"Yes?"

"Stop this game."

"Going to drink, Eliot?"

"I earned it, same way you earned that cigarette."

"Meaning?"

Conte does not reply.

"That stuff sends you deeper into depression."

"Doesn't matter anymore."

"Why?"

"Enough."

He takes the bottle out of the bag: "Go ahead, light up again while I pour myself a big one."

"I bought the pack. I threw away nineteen and kept the one you saw. That's it."

"Let's figure this out in fairness to both of our sad sides. I pour out one shot—like this. I dump the rest down the sink—like this. Going going gone. I knock back this shot but not before you go fetch the butt, light up, and inhale deeply. Then we get down on our knees and pray for the repose of his eternal soul."

She walks over. Puts her arms around him. He's aroused. She puts her hand on his crotch: "Bobby is alive and so is this thing in my hand. Listen: I'm weaker than you. You find that hard to believe, I know. I smoked. You don't have to match me with that shot glass."

"Don't lie to me, Catherine."

"In tough shape, El, but he'll pull through, with what consequences we don't yet know. He's alive. You can visit in a few days. You will see him again. You two will talk about pirated Pavarotti gems."

"Bobby didn't die?"

"Bobby didn't die."

He pours the shot into the sink. Sits, heavily, suddenly exhausted, wanting to go to bed for a week: "At least he didn't die."

(Long pause.)

"At least, El?"

No response.

"At least? I don't get that."

"I'm hungry. Tell you after we eat."

"Tell me now. At least? I don't get that."

"After we eat. Tell me about Bobby's situation while I tear into this."

(Long pause. Conte is eating. Fast. She doesn't eat.)

"The shoulder wound. The bullet passed through. He'll likely have permanent trouble with range of motion with that arm, but—"

Conte with a mouthful: "Since he isn't a big league pitcher, who cares?"

"Yeah, El."

"Sweetheart, this isn't pizza as you always call it. It's tomato pie. Say tomato pie."

"The neck wound was superficial despite the heavy bleeding and—"

"According to a local historian and writer who knows everything, you know Gene? Tomato pie is a Utica invention. 1914. O'Scugnizzo Pizzeria. The owner was the Neapolitan inventor of tomato pie in this

country. Some claim an earlier, Trenton, New Jersey origin, but Gene disputes the Jersey pretender's claim. Eugeno—"

"Eliot."

"Eugeno Burlino was the original owner of O'Scugnizzo Pizzeria."

(Extended silence while he eats.)

"El. Where are you? Come back."

"The meaning of O'Scugnizzo is embedded in nineteenth-century dialect and the culture of the poor. It means—"

"Okay. I'll play. O'Scugnizzo on Bleecker. Don and I go there for a slice once in a while, midafternoon."

"You and Don Belmonte, that beautiful mountain of a man, pushing seventy, or I'd be jealous. Continue, please. The fucking medical report."

"The lung shot. That's the problem. Caused something according to my source inside Saint Jude which he called a tension pneumothorax. Don't ask. It's dramatic is all I know. The wounded lung fills up with too much air like a big balloon. It keeps inflating and inflating. Putting pressure on all the structures around the lung. Blood vessels get compressed. The trachea gets shoved to the side. The heart gets shoved to the side. Blood can't flow normally." (Conte continues eating.) "Bobby goes into shock. Without emergency treatment, intubation, surgery, he dies in an hour or so." (Conte wipes his mouth. Takes another piece.)

"They open him up and they save him. He'll live but he almost—"

"There's twenty-five pieces in this box. I've scarfed four to your zero. More Diet Coke?"

She reaches across, takes his hand. Says, quietly, "He'll be okay. Will you?"

"Anything is possible."

"They think in surgery they may have damaged something called the laryngeal something-or-other nerve. It will cause significant hoarseness. Nerves are tricky. It might never fully heal."

"Which makes him an even more colorful guy. The routine obscenities sound even dirtier."

(They relax, a little.)

"Eat, Catherine."

She nibbles. She says, "I've listened to perp talk for too long. At least he's alive? I'm going to take a big leap here. You knew for some time that Bobby was in danger. This was not some pissed off guy he once helped put away in Troy. This is a guy hired to do assassination. A Utica plate, presumably. You knew this was coming, didn't you? Which is why you said they killed him. 'Tell Eddie or Ellie that it finally,' is what Patrolman Dominguez heard."

He won't look at her. Pushes his plate aside. Says, "What Bobby was trying to say was tell Eliot that what he feared for a year has finally happened. I didn't know it was coming—I feared it was."

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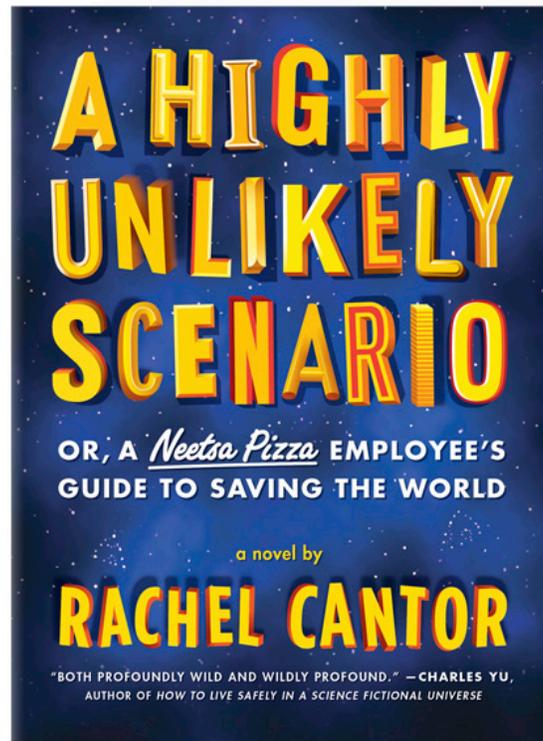
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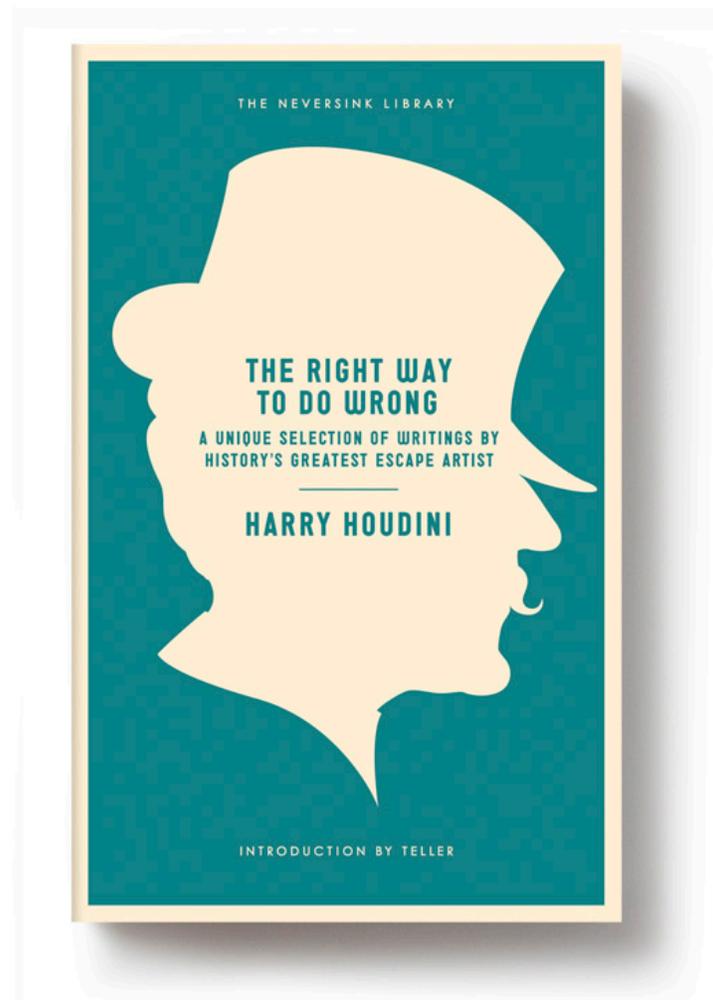
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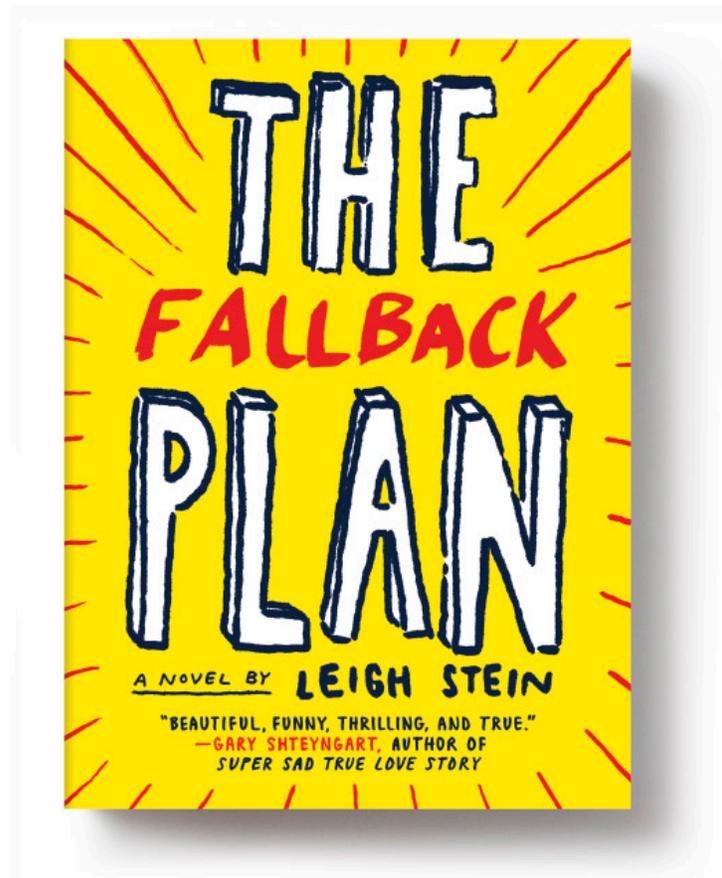
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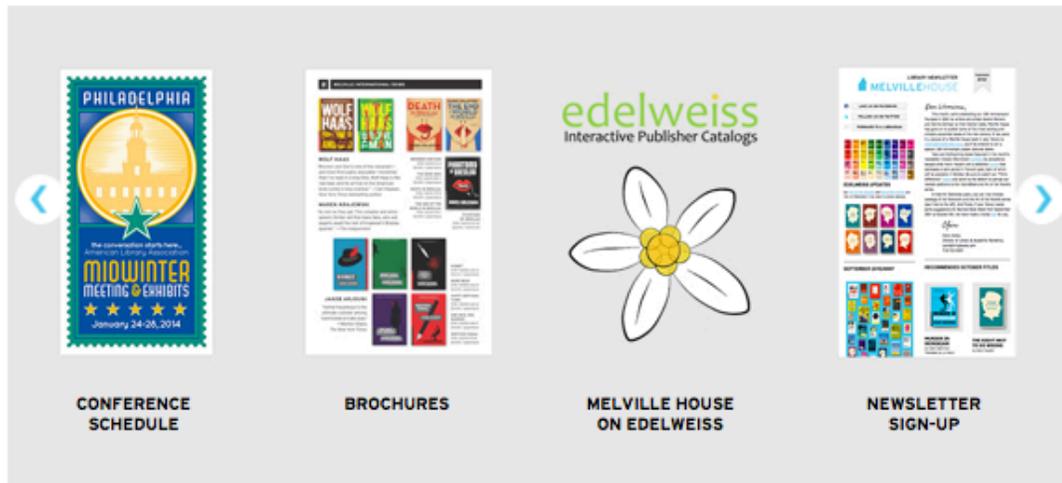
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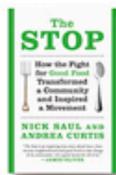
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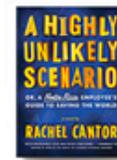
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